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\nDALEKS – INVASION\n

\nEARTH 2150A.D.\n

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\nNovelisation by \n

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\nBased on the Aaru motion picture written by \n

\nMilton Subotsky; with additional material by David Whitaker\n

\nfrom the BBC television serial by Terry Nation\n

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\nPROLOGUE\n

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\nThe Merchant Street Heist\n

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\nSid Jones struck a match, lit his cigarette and relaxed behind the wheel of his Jag. Of course, that Jaguar car wasn't actually his, in any legal sense except for that old saying about possession being nine tenths of the law. Sid had stolen the car from a nice quiet mews in Knightsbridge earlier in the day. The Jag's licence plate wouldn't be in circulation until at least morning and Sid would have reluctantly abandoned it long before then. It was a flash car, a 1965 model, so barely a year old and wouldn't look out of place in a street with up-market shops like this one, and that was why he needed it. In a street full of expensive travel agents, tailors and investment brokers, they had needed a car that fitted in. \n

\nAfter all, they didn't want to look out of place when they robbed the jewellers.\n

\nSid took a long, satisfied drag on his smoke and then froze. He had seen a movement in his wing mirror. Sure enough a man was strolling along the street on the other side of the road. As he approached, Sid recognised the blue uniform of a policeman. \n

\nHow the hell could the copper be there? His beat didn't bring him to Merchant Street for another hour. They had studied the local policeman's beat for an hour to ensure their timing was right.\n

\nThe copper wasn't wearing a helmet.\n

\nSo, that was it, Sid thought. Of all the rotten luck. This wasn't the usual policeman who walked this beat. The peaked cap told him that this was a Special, a civilian reserve policeman who took over when needed. The regular copper must have been ill or something. That really was rotten luck.\n

\nWell, thought Sid, it was going to be bad luck for the Special as well. He slid down in the Jag's driver's seat so he could only just peek out of the window. The oblivious Special checked a few doors, making sure they were locked. After checking the travel agent's door he stopped and looked in the window, peering at the model of a jet aeroplane and at the exotic posters of far off places he would never be able to visit, and at the picture of a stunning Hawaiian girl in a grass skirt. By the time the Special realised there was someone behind him it was too late. Sid slammed his cosh into the Special's stomach. He grunted in surprise and pain. A second blow to the stomach doubled him over, making it easy for Sid to bring the cosh down on the back of the unfortunate Special's head. The copper dropped to the ground just as an explosion shattered the windows of the jeweller's shop and an alarm bell filled the night air.\n

\nSid was already running back to the Jag. He was behind the wheel and had the engine revved by the time Pete and Smudger came running out of the shop, their arms full of stolen jewellery. It

looked like the haul would be enough to see them all on Easy Street for a year at least.\n

\nThe thieves quickly slipped into the back of the car and slammed the doors shut. A moment later the Jag pulled away. Within minutes it would be far from the scene of the crime. It would be dumped on the far side of London, clean of any dabs because Sid was a pro and had insisted that they all wore gloves.\n

\nThe Jag took the corner and sped away from the scene of the robbery.\n

\nSid Jones and his friends had just had a very good night.\n

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\nBells were ringing in Tom Campbell's head. What had happened? What hit him? He had been looking at that pretty Hawaiian girl and then...\n

\nThere had been a thief. The thug had used something to hit him. A cosh, maybe?\n

\nHis head was still ringing. No, wait, it wasn't just in his head. It was an alarm. His brain cleared and he saw the shattered front of a jewellery store. A flash car was speeding away, too. Why would a flash car leave the scene of a crime like this?\n

\nOnly one reason made any sense. The thieves had to be in it.\n

\nTom sprinted after the car. He was never going to catch it on foot. He blew his whistle, summoning any other officers in the area. The car still sped away. In frustration he hurled his truncheon after the car but it had already pulled too far ahead. \n

\nAlerted by the explosion and the sound of Tom's whistle, people spilled from local pubs and houses, eager to see what all the fuss was about. Tom ignored them. His head was beginning to swim again. He ignored that too. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the reassuringly solid blue shape of a police box. He could phone in a report of the robbery and Control would get cars out after the thieves. \n

\nTom grasped the police box's door and stepped into the cupboard sized space within...\n

\n...except that he stepped into something impossible. Instead of the tiny shed-like interior he had expected, Tom found himself in an impossibly large and brightly lit room filled with all manner of electronic equipment he couldn't even begin to understand. \n

\nThere were three people in the room. A kindly-looking old man in rather Edwardian clothes, a girl of about ten and a really gorgeous dark haired woman of about his own age. They all looked at him in surprise.\n

\nTom opened his mouth to speak but nothing came. Nausea overtook him and he toppled forward onto the gleaming floor.\n

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\nDr Who looked with surprise at the young man lying sprawled on the floor of his space and time machine. Louise, his niece, hurriedly put aside the tray of drinks she had just made and knelt by the unconscious man.\n

\n'He must have pulled open the door just as I de-magnetised it,' Dr Who said. He sounded as if he was explaining to himself as much as to his companions.\n

\nLouise inspected the young man gently. 'He's got a terrible bump on his head.'\n

\n'Oh, nothing that a little fresh air won't cure,' Dr Who said hopefully, but he turned on the scanner screen to see what had happened outside, just in case he was wrong. 'I'll see what's going on outside.'\n

\nThe screen flickered to life, showing Londoners milling around the shattered front of a shop. A drunk was shouting to everybody and nobody. 'Stop them. They're getting away.' Who he was talking about, Dr Who had no idea. \n

\n'Thieves,' the drunk yelled, inadvertently supplying the answer. 'They're getting away.'\n

\nThere was no sign on the scanner of anyone fleeing. The thieves were obviously long gone. The crowd was growing, though.\n

\nDr Who turned away from the scanner. He had no intention of keeping his space and time machine, Tardis, in the locale of a robbery. Its Police Box disguise would attract too much attention. 'He'll just have to come with us, that's all.' Before his companions could answer, he pushed the control lever sending Tardis spinning into time and space.\n

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\nDr Who had no way of knowing that as Tardis disappeared, the drunk he had observed on screen, Joe Moore, had been reaching for the door. As the box faded away with a whooshing sound in front of his eyes, Joe's hand caught nothing but air and he fell flat on his face. That was where he was found by the responding police car, who took his statement and then, after hearing his tale of a disappearing Police Box, they gave him a cell for the night to sleep off whatever he had been drinking.\n

\nThe police had more important things to think about. They had found Tom Campbell's truncheon and his cap, which was spattered with blood, but of Special Constable Tom Campbell himself there was no sign.\n

CHAPTER ONE

An Impossible Journey

Tom Campbell's journey back to consciousness was a painful and confusing one. He struggled to bring his thoughts into any kind of order and as he opened his eyes he had no idea of exactly where he was. The machinery that filled the room was modern – futuristic even, to his untrained eye – and that made him think he may have been in hospital, but if it was a hospital why was there a ten year old girl wandering around with a clipboard, looking at him with concern from time to time? And if it was a hospital wouldn't he be on a bed rather than in a rather comfortable chair?

He grimaced as the room's bright lights made his eyes and head ache but he kept his eyes open, determined to make some sense of what had happened.

He forced himself to concentrate, to focus. The room had black drapes around the walls, which made the room look even bigger. The scientific equipment was, he now noticed, a mixture of recognisable things like microscopes, Bunsen burners and bottles of chemicals as well as banks of computers and machines he couldn't even begin to describe. The three people in the room all looked at him with a kindly sort of concern. The old man, the young girl, the pretty woman of his own age in the stylish tweed outfit. He recognised them. Their faces were familiar.

He'd seen them when...

The robbery!

He had seen them when he opened the Police Box door after the robbery. How had he got into this place after opening the Police Box door? It didn't matter.

Tom realised a cool cloth had been placed over his forehead. He plucked it off and tried to sit up. 'The robbers,' he said to the old man who was now standing by his chair. 'Can I use your telephone?'

The young woman in tweed was kneeling by Tom's chair. She glanced up at the old man and gently took the cloth from Tom.

The old fellow ignored Tom's question. 'And what is your name, young man?'

The answer came automatically. 'Tom Campbell, Special Constabulary, K Division. Now, can I use your telephone?'

Again the old man ignored Tom's question and asked one of his own. 'And can you tell me the date?'

'The date?' Why would he want to know the date? The penny dropped. The scientific equipment, the family feel, the old fellow asking questions. This old lad had to be a doctor. 'Oh, I see. You want to know if I'm all right. It's March the thirty first,' Tom answered quickly. 'Now can I

use your telephone?"

The old man seemed satisfied that Tom's faculties were in working order and gave an approving nod.

For the first time, Tom noticed that there was an odd humming sound in the room, which was dipping in pitch, like an engine of some kind powering down.

'We're arriving, Grandfather,' the young girl called. She was looking at a TV screen which was showing swirls of colour.

Colour? They had a colour TV? What were they watching? There was colour TV in America but British TV was still broadcast in black and white. There was talk of colour in the next few years but nothing had happened yet. How could they have a colour TV? It didn't seem to be showing anything but swirls of clouds and crackles of energy? Was that the colour equivalent of the snowy interference his Mum's black and white set got when it rained? Wait, the girl had said "arrived". Arrived where?

'Oh, good.' The old man turned his gaze from the girl back to Tom. 'I'm afraid you can't use our telephone,' he said genially. 'For one thing, we haven't got one – and even if we had I don't think it would do any good. Not in 2150AD.'

Tom simply didn't know how to answer the old boy. He looked completely serious, despite talking the most absolute nonsense. Tom looked at the attractive young woman for support. '2150?'

She just smiled encouragingly and nodded. 'That's right.'

He had walked into a mad house. They were obviously all quite bonkers, or maybe they were some of those hippies who took mind-altering drugs.

'Allow me to introduce myself,' the old man said formally, straightening up from his usual slightly stooped stance. 'I am Dr Who.' He clasped Tom's hand in a friendly handshake. 'This is my niece, Louise,' he added indicating the young woman with that smile Tom found so appealing.

'Hello,' she said, again disarming him with her smile.

'My grand-daughter, Susan,' Dr Who pointed to the young girl who waved impishly. The old fellow's arms swept out indicating the room around them. 'And this is my time and space machine, Tardis.' He rubbed his hands together gleefully. 'It is capable of taking us to any age on any planet in any universe. You arrived just as we were about to leave for London in the year...'

'Yes, I know,' Tom had heard enough of this madness. He pushed himself out of the chair. '2150,' he finished for Dr Who. Whatever fantasy this lot were playing at he still had a job to do. 'You don't seem to realise there's been a serious crime committed. I don't know what you're all up to but I ought to report you for all of...' he waved his hand around the room, '...this.' He shook his head sourly. He'd had more than enough of this foolishness. '2150 indeed.'

Tom Campbell pushed the neatly painted white inner door open and for the second time that day stepped into the impossible.

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\nBeyond those gleaming white doors should have been the familiar damp streets of London at midnight. Instead of the dark night and streetlights the sun fought a losing battle to break through heavy grey rain clouds. The street was also gone, and the sturdy shape of the Police Box now stood by the ruins of what had once been an ornate building. The Thames ran past only a few dozen yards away. Tom could see Battersea Power Station and various other London landmarks on the other side of the river, all of them in varying stages of ruin.\n

\nIt was impossible. It was just, simply impossible.\n

\n'It's all different,' Tom protested, looking around, desperately trying to make some sense of his situation.\n

\nDr Who and his family had followed Tom out of the Police Box – Tardis, Dr Who had called it. They had all donned coats and Dr Who was slipping into a pair of gloves. From somewhere he had picked up a powder blue scarf.\n

\n'Well, I told you to believe him,' Louise said, closing Tardis' door behind her.\n

\nTom still reached for an answer that didn't involve... well, accepting the most impossible suggestion of all. 'But it's day time,' he protested.\n

\nSusan ignored him and joined her grandfather. 'Are you sure it's 2150?' she asked. Her tone suggested that Tardis might not always go where her grandfather intended.\n

\nHowever, the old fellow seemed convinced. 'Yes, absolutely sure, Susie,' he said. \n

\nSusan climbed a pile of broken bricks for a better look around. She seemed no more impressed by what she saw. 'But, Grandfather, it looks so deserted.'\n

\n'I should say decaying,' Dr Who suggested, pulling gently at the tattered edge of a faded Sugar Puffs poster. Tom could just make out the words ZERO SUGAR RETRO REISSUE at the bottom of the poster.\n

\n'So what's happened to London?' Louise asked, moving towards a viaduct arch to look at whatever lay beyond.\n

\n'Maybe it's Sunday,' Susan suggested.\n

\n'Of course it's not Sunday,' Tom answered sharply. 'I'm playing football on Sunday.'\n

\nDr Who and Louise exchanged a look and then tried hard to hide their laughter. \n

\nThat was the moment Tom knew that it was true. Impossible though it was, somehow that infernal Police Box had brought them all through time to 2150... and 2150 looked utterly awful. Far from being the shiny, optimistic thing he has envisaged, the future was desolate, lifeless and crumbling.\n

\nDr Who followed his niece towards the archway. 'Come along, Louise. Let's explore over here.'\n

\nFrom her position atop the pile of bricks, Susan was still looking around. She sounded confused and concerned. 'There's no machines,' she said. 'No voices.' She turned back to Tom. 'And there aren't any birds.'\n

\n'That bloke must have hit me harder than I thought,' Tom muttered, rubbing his head.\n

\nThe sound of wood scraping against brick made Tom spin back to Susan. She had stepped on a plank of wood to get a better view but her weight had caused the plank to shift, dislodging bricks which had been resting against a girder, holding it in place. That single step had a horrific domino effect. Tom could hear wood, steel girders and bricks all around them begin to move and one of the girders had begun toppling towards Susan.\n

\n'Susan!' Louise cried out in alarm, but Susan was transfixed at the sight of the falling column of steel.\n

\nTom reacted instinctively, running towards the girl. 'Come here!' He swept her away from the unsteady pile of bricks she still stood on. Still carrying the girl he ran towards the archway where Dr Who and Louise were watching the remains of the building near which Tardis had arrived crumble and collapse, engulfing the Police Box. The rain of masonry continued for a good thirty seconds. Tom and the others moved further into the archway, turning their heads away and tightly closing their eyes in protection against the thick plumes of dust being thrown up by the building's collapse.\n

\nAt last, the avalanche eventually stopped and Tom opened his eyes. The dust was clearing and he put Susan down.\n

\nDr Who patted the young policeman on the arm in gratitude. 'Thank you, dear boy,' he said, putting an affectionate and protective arm around his young grand-daughter. 'I shall be eternally grateful.'\n

\nLouise was the first to look back towards Tardis. She caught her uncle's arm. 'Look.'\n

\nLooking around carefully to ensure that no more masonry was likely to fall, Tom led the way back towards Tardis. \n

\nThe Police Box was partially submerged in debris from the fall. A heavy layer of dust sat on its roof while bricks and shattered planks surrounded it. More alarmingly, a pair of heavy steel girders had fallen across the front of the blue box, preventing the doors from opening outwards. Tom put his shoulder under one of the girders but knew immediately that he was wasting his time. It was simply too heavy, even if they all put all of their effort into it. \n

\n'We'll never shift this lot,' he said.\n

\nDr Who didn't look at all surprised. Neither did Louise or Susan for that matter. Obviously they had known straight away that the metal beam was too heavy to be moved. He had been the only one dim enough to risk injuring himself by trying. \n

\nDr Who was already moving past Tom towards a building around twenty yards away which seemed to be in a far better condition than the majority of others in the area, with its roof and walls all looking to be sound and intact. 'There's a warehouse over there. We'll see if we can find a crowbar or something.'\n

\nThey had taken a few steps across the uneven ground when Susan's voice halted them. 'I think I've hurt my ankle,' the girl said. She sounded embarrassed at having caused the accident

blocking their way back into Tardis and guilty for being more of a nuisance with her injury but she was right. She was definitely having difficulty putting even her own meagre weight on her ankle.

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\n‘Oh, Susie.’ Dr Who dropped to a knee and manipulated his grand-daughter’s ankle for a few seconds. The girl winced in pain but didn’t call out. ‘Probably just a slight sprain,’ Dr Who said, ‘but you should probably stay here with Louise.’\n

\nLouise nodded her assent to the idea and helped Susan to sit on a sturdy looking stack of bricks while Dr Who turned back to Tom. \n

\n‘Well, don’t stand there dithering,’ the old boy said, moving across the bricks with surprising agility.\n

\nTom hurried to catch up with the older man. ‘Listen, Doc,’ he said, ‘I don’t understand this at all. All this moving forward in time.’ He pointed back at Tardis. ‘And what about the inside of that thing? I mean, on the outside it’s ordinary enough but inside it’s the size of a house.’\n

\nDr Who clucked happily. ‘Excellent, my boy, I like an enquiring mind.’ He shooed Tom towards the warehouse. ‘Just as time is regarded as the fourth dimension, so space is equally the fifth dimension.’ He looked to see if Tom was following. \n

\nThe young policeman just nodded. \n

\nEncouraged, Dr Who continued, ‘For space knows no boundaries and is completely timeless.’ They had reached the warehouse and Dr Who pushed the door open. ‘There. Now, I’m sure that has made it all perfectly clear, eh?’\n

\n‘Oh, yeah. Perfectly clear to me.’ Tom hadn’t understood a word of it. In court during a trial – or even in his day job as a clerk for the council – Tom had occasionally come across words he didn’t understand. He had never been bewildered by several sentences’ worth before. He watched Dr Who disappear through the door and wondered again if he had just gone slightly mad. Perhaps this was just a dream? Maybe it was all part of his concussion? That was a rather comforting thought.\n

\n‘Come along, m’boy. Don’t dawdle,’ Dr Who’s voice called from inside the warehouse.\n

\nIf this was a dream brought on by concussion it would be rather dull to just stand about waiting to wake up and if it was real... well, he couldn’t let an old man go wandering about a potentially dangerous area on his own. Whatever year it was, Tom was still a police officer. Besides, even though this Dr Who and his family were all clearly bonkers in the head, Tom found that he actually rather liked them all. Did that mean he was bonkers too?\n

\nIt didn’t matter. The simple truth was he had to go and help Dr Who. It was the only way back into Tardis. He hurried after the old man. ‘There is another question I’d like to put to you, Doctor.’ There was no sign of the old boy until Tom reached a corner and saw Dr Who pushing his way through a sturdy inner door. ‘Doctor, there you are.’\n

\nDr Who held the door open for Tom to follow him.\n

\n‘Look, Doctor,’ Tom began, ‘if you can travel anywhere...’\n

\nDr Who waved a hand and shushed Tom. They were now in a large warehouse filled with stacked cardboard boxes. The inventor's focus was solidly on finding the crowbar they had come looking for. His eyes gleamed with intelligence and curiosity as he scanned back and forth, searching for anything that could be of use.\n

\nThe first chamber of the warehouse brought them no success. The pair of them hurried up a set of stairs to the next floor up.\n

\n'We'll try round here,' Tom said indicating another large room stacked with boxes.\n

\nDr Who nodded agreement and followed, his eyes still delving into every corner of the room.\n

\nOnce again they had no success and Tom pulled open the door to the next room. Like the others they had tried, the room was piled high with cardboard boxes. A two foot-long crowbar perched on a cardboard box just inside the door. Tom scooped it up in triumph but even as he lifted the crowbar he was on alert.\n

\nOn the right side of the room, the cap of a black boot protruded from a gap between two boxes. \n

\nThere was someone else in the room.\n

\nHe stopped Dr Who and quickly put a finger to his lips to stop any questions. He pointed at the boot. Dr Who nodded his understanding.\n

\nHefting the crowbar, Tom crept towards the boot. It could be someone as lost as them or someone frightened and hiding. \n

\nOr it could be someone less friendly.\n

\nThey stopped by the cardboard boxes and Tom gave a sharp nod. He and Dr Who dragged the cardboard boxes away and Tom raised the crowbar should he need to defend himself or Dr Who.\n

\nThe man behind the boxes wore an all-in-one coverall suit of some kind of shiny plastic material. On his feet were a pair of black boots while a bizarre helmet was jammed onto his head. It might have been a normal black helmet like motorcyclists wore except for what looked like a chunky radio on left side of it. The visor was rather odd, too, being a curve of transparent material covering the top of the face. Behind that a strange pair of what looked like silver sunglasses covered the man's eyes and gave the face something of an insect look.\n

\nThe face.\n

\nThere was no emotion at all on the face.\n

\nThe man moved and Tom pulled the crowbar back, ready to fend off any attack, but Dr Who pulled him back a step.\n

\nThe man with the insect expression and the strange black outfit pitched forward and crashed to the ground. A gaping wound was visible in the black suit and dark blood had flowed down the man's legs.\n

\nHe was the first person they had seen since they had arrived and he had been stabbed to death. \n

\nThe man had undoubtedly been murdered.\n

CHAPTER TWO

The Evil in the River

Leaving Susan sitting on a sturdy stack of bricks with her weight off of her injured ankle, Louise hurried down to the river. The water in the Thames would hardly be the cleanest she had ever seen but it would serve its purpose in drenching her handkerchief to make a cold compress for Susan's ankle.

From the shore Louise had a clearer view of the city, both up and down the river. It was the same picture of desolation in every direction. Buildings left to crumble into the streets. Scrubby bits of shrubbery grew at unlikely angles from cracks high in walls. For those plants to have taken root in such inhospitable places and to have grown out so much, the city must have been in decay for years.

London was Louise's home city. She knew it well and she loved the place. She had lived there all of her life. Seeing it devastated and abandoned like this was both heart-breaking and disturbing.

It looked like photographs she had seen of Berlin and Stalingrad during the bombings of World War Two which had reduced the cities to rubble.

Thinking of London as a war zone did little to improve Louise's mood. It had taken most of her childhood for London to really begin to recover from the Blitz. She soaked her handkerchief again and squeezed the excess water out. Rising to her feet she turned to go back to Susan.

Louise had left Susan just ten or fifteen yards behind her so that the girl could keep her in sight as she wet the handkerchief. She was surprised that there was no sign of the girl. Perhaps it wasn't that surprising really, she thought as she hurried back towards the place she had left her cousin. Susan was permanently curious, a trait she had picked up from her grandfather. If she had seen anything even vaguely interesting Susan would definitely have hobbled off into investigate.

Louise looked around the immediate area, hoping to catch sight of the girl. Perhaps through the arch they had sheltered under? Over towards the warehouse, maybe? No, there was no sign of her anywhere.

'Susan?' she asked quietly. 'Where are you?'

There was no reply. Louise widened her search, looking all around the area in which they had arrived. 'Susan?' she called more loudly, concern creeping into her voice. 'Susan?'

Gunshots.

The undoubted crack of gunshots made Louise's head jerk around. They were close by, less than half a mile. It sounded like more than one gun. Was it a battle?

\nWas Susan anywhere near the trouble?\n

\n'Susan?' she called frantically. 'Susan?' She ran to a pile of bricks by a crumbling wall and used the extra height to get a better view. 'Susan?'\n

\nA powerful hand clamped across Louise's mouth. She could taste the dirt ingrained in the skin.\n

\n'No noise and I'll let you go,' a deep Scottish voice rumbled at her. A middle aged man dressed in a ragged old donkey jacket, grimy trousers and cloth cap slid round the wall. His hair and beard were matted and in need of washing. Louise pushed and struggled against the grip but he held her firmly, jamming her back against the wall. 'No noise or they'll hear you.'\n

\nLouise looked hard into the man's face. She could deliver a knee to his groin and escape but he seemed more concerned than aggressive. She relaxed and nodded slowly.\n

\nSlowly, the man moved his hand from Louise's mouth, but looked ready to clamp it back in place if she made any noise. 'Where's Susan?' she demanded. 'What have you done with her?'\n

\nThe man ignored the question and pushed past Louise, his eyes looking around constantly. He was even more frightened than Louise had thought. 'You must be stupid moving about in the open like this.' He caught Louise's wrist. 'Come on.'\n

\nLouise pulled hard against the man's grasp, ready to twist and use a Judo throw against him. 'Where are we going?'\n

\n'You want to see the girl, don't you?' the man sounded angry as well as afraid.\n

\n'Yes,' Louise answered, 'of course I do.'\n

\nHe pulled at her wrist again. 'Well, come on, then.'\n

\nIf he knew where Susan was there was no sense in fighting a man who was so obviously terrified. If he was lying, Louise was confident she could dispatch him easily enough. He was strong but untrained. Yes, he would be easy enough for her to deal with.\n

\nLouise allowed herself to be led away through the arch.\n

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\nTom Campbell was nervous. \n

\nThe more he looked at the man in the black coverall, the more concerned he became. There was something in the whole outfit that looked like a kind of uniform. It didn't have any insignia so it probably wasn't military or police but it had that look about it, much in the way Teddy Boys or motorcycle gangs had a uniform way of dressing. Actually, with that helmet he could be part of a motorbike gang. If he was, that would mean that there would definitely be other members of the gang around.\n

\nDr Who was kneeling on the warehouse floor, examining the fallen man. He removed the helmet and passed it up to Tom. Tom immediately dismissed his earlier thought of it being a motorbike helmet. In shape it looked far more like a German soldier's helmet from World War Two and the radio device on the side was functional rather than decorative or commercial.\n

\n'He's dead,' Dr Who confirmed, pushing himself back up to his feet. 'He was killed by an expert. The knife wounds were inflicted to cause maximum injury and almost immediate death.'\n\nThat didn't make Tom feel any more comfortable. He really wanted to just take the crowbar, get back into the Police Box and go home. On the other hand, he was a police officer and a man had been murdered. Even though this wasn't his era, he still felt a duty to investigate what had happened. He turned the helmet over in his hands and looked again at the aerial. 'Doctor, it's a radio, isn't it?'\n

\n'Certainly a receiver of some sort,' Dr Who confirmed, taking the helmet back from Tom. He prised a covering from the radio attachment showing a collection of circuits and electronic parts Tom didn't begin to recognise. 'Oh, yes. Highly advanced,' he said approvingly. 'Miniature antenna and complex microcircuits.'\n

\nThe old man's head snapped around. The unmistakable sound of machine-gun gun echoed through the warehouse. 'Gunfire.'\n

\n'It's not far away either,' Tom agreed.\n

\nDr Who hustled Tom towards the door. 'Let's get back.'\n

\nClutching the crowbar, Tom hurried after the old man. He really just wanted to get everyone into Tardis so they could go home. \n

\nThey had passed into another large store-room full of boxes when they heard a scuffing sound from the far end of the room.\n

\nDr Who caught Tom's arm. 'It could be the killer,' the old fellow warned.\n

\nTom was aware of that, and more than a little nervous about it. But he was still a copper and he still had a duty to perform. 'We'd better investigate,' he said, wishing he sounded more positive about the prospect.\n

\nThis section of the warehouse had clearly not originally been intended as a storage space. Large pieces of industrial machinery took up half of the gloomy space with the rest filled by the now expected stacks of cardboard boxes. The floor space was almost completely covered, bar for alleys left between the boxes. They passed through the length of the room. Ahead, at the top of a short flight of stairs, a door flapped on its hinges. It led through into an office that was partly open to the elements where a section of the wall where a window had once been had fallen out. Another door was at the other side of the office. Tom twisted the handle and stepped through... into fresh air. \n

\nThe room beyond the door was completely gone, its floors collapsed and only the skeleton of wall left standing.\n

\nAs his foot fell through where the floor should be, Tom's hand instinctively tightened on the handle of the door. That was all that saved him from falling to the brick-strewn ground forty feet below as his impetus carried him into open air.\n

\nThe door swung out, dragging Tom with it. He hung, clinging to the door handle as the door swung further open. He felt the brick of the wall hit his back hard as the door swung fully open.

The door creaked at its hinges. It was going to give way. Tom kicked against the wall and swung back towards the doorway. Dr Who caught his shoulders as soon as he was within arms' reach. He was just in time. The door creaked and fell away from its hinges, plummeting to the ground far below as Dr Who braced his shoulder against the door frame and pulled Tom's torso over the threshold onto the floor. Tom pushed against the doorframe and kicked his feet against the wall, finally pushing himself up and in. \n

\nHe lay on the floor, gasping for breath, just relieved to be on relatively safe ground. 'Thanks, Doc,' he said breathlessly.\n

\nTom glanced down at the door, which now lay in several shattered pieces on the ground. He didn't want to think what the fall would have done to him.\n

\n'I can't see the girls anywhere.' Dr Who's voice had risen in concern. From their position at the door they could see the area in which Tardis had landed, and where they had left Louise with Susan. The old fellow was right. There was no sign of the two girl anywhere. 'Where have they gone?'\n

\nTom's answer was halted by the sound of more gunfire. This time it sounded far closer.\n

\n'Come on.' Dr Who was already running back through the office towards the stairs. He ran with an ungainly stooped shuffle, but he was quick enough, and Tom had to pick up his knees to keep pace.\n

\nNeither man was aware that as they ran through the warehouse a dark haired young man watched them suspiciously from behind a stack of cardboard boxes. A knife glinted in his hand.\n

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\nLouise had quickly shaken her wrist free of this strange man's grasp and simply followed his directions. He had told her to make for the Embankment Underground Station. She noticed that he moved with a pronounced limp and struggled to keep up with her. She had to slow down to ensure that he didn't fall behind. \n

\nJust as they turned into the street housing the Underground's entrance, Louise heard a whining sound. It seemed to be coming from above and it was undoubtedly growing louder. She automatically looked up for the source of the sound, but her companion – possibly her captor – caught her shoulder and dragged her into a deep doorway.\n

\n'They can see us even from up there,' he whispered.\n

\nLouise had no idea who "they" were and risked just peeking out to look upwards. A huge craft flew overhead, its lines clear and distinct against a cloudy grey sky. Its body was roughly circular in shape and seemed to consist of a larger disc with a smaller one on top. The two discs rotated in opposite directions. Thruster ports and stabiliser wings at the back suggested that this ship was designed both for flying in an atmosphere and travelling through space.\n

\nIt was undoubtedly a spaceship.\n

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\nA few hundred yards away, Tom and Dr Who were staring up at exactly the same ship.\n

\n'Quite remarkable,' Dr Who said. He sounded genuinely shocked.\n

\nTom was relieved he wasn't the only one so taken aback. He had seen his fair share of science fiction films. He had even enjoyed Professor X and Nightshade on TV but to see it in real life was something else altogether. 'It's a flying saucer.'\n

\nTom's voice seemed to break Dr Who's reverie. 'Yes, that's a very apt description,' he said. \n

\nThey moved further into the open to get a better view of the spaceship's course. 'It appears to be landing somewhere in the vicinity of Sloane Square.'\n

\nA city in ruins, a murdered man and now a spaceship... that was enough for Tom Campbell.

This was just too far beyond his experience or understanding. 'Come on, Doc. Let's find the girls and get out of here.'\n

\nDr Who nodded his agreement and the two men ran back in the direction of Tardis and, they hoped, the two missing girls.\n

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\nFrom her position hiding in the doorway, Louise watched the spaceship stop to hover somewhere around Sloane Square and then begin a slow, vertical descent. Four hydraulic legs emerged from the ship as it closed on the ground. She was disappointed to see it disappear from view, obscured by the buildings in the street.\n

\nThe spaceship dropping out of view was the moment the man who had brought her here was waiting for. 'Come on,' he said, leading her in a run across the street into the Embankment Underground Station.\n

\nOnce through the entrance, the man kept running and led her down a long set of steps into the heart of the station. To her relief a familiar voice greeted her.\n

\n'Louise!'\n

\n'Susan, thank heavens you're all right.' She stopped at a bench where a young man was bandaging Susan's ankle and gave her young cousin a huge hug.\n

\nThe man who had led Louise to the station brusquely interrupted the reunion. 'Come on. Keep moving.'\n

\n'But what about the others?' Louise protested. \n

\nThe big man looked irritated and confused. 'What others?'\n

\n'My grandfather and a policeman called Tom,' Susan said, pushing herself painfully onto her feet.\n

\n'I'll go back for them later,' the Scotsman scowled. 'Come on.'\n

\nHe turned and moved through a doorway, but not before Louise had read on his face that he was lying about going back for her uncle. The man who had been bandaging Susan's ankle picked the girl up and followed the gruff Scotsman. \n

\nLouise had no alternative other than to follow.\n

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\nTom and Dr Who had returned to Tardis. There had been no sign of Louise and Susan in the immediate vicinity of the Police Box and they had enlarged their search area. Both men returned a few minutes later.\n

\n'Any sign of them?' Dr Who asked urgently.\n

\nTom shook his head. He hated disappointing the old boy but he hadn't seen anyone. 'No,' he said. 'I'm sorry.'\n

\nDr Who was obviously desperately worried about his family. He looked around again, ultimately pointing towards a large wall. 'Let's try over here.' \n

\nTom didn't have the heart to tell the old boy that they had already searched that area.\n

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\nThe young man who had been in the warehouse a few minutes earlier watching Tom and Dr Who hurried down a steep set of stairs from a side entrance into the Embankment Underground Station. He had untidy dark hair, a few days' growth of stubble and under his polo necked sweater, denim jacket and jeans he somehow managed to look both strong and wiry at the same time. He had crossed a small waiting area when he heard footsteps approaching. Ducking behind a wall he pulled a vicious-looking Bowie knife from a sheath inside his jacket he waited until a familiar figure limped past the edge of the wall.\n

\n'Wyler, he said.\n

\nThe gruff Scot turned. 'There you are, David.'\n

\nThe young man looked at Louise and Susan curiously. 'Who are these two?' he asked.\n

\n'I found them down by the river,' Wyler answered. 'Open targets.'\n

\nDavid nodded. 'I was nearly caught at the warehouse. There were two of them. A white haired old man and a young man.'\n

\n'That must have been my grandfather and Tom,' Susan exclaimed.\n

\nDavid ignored Susan and spoke to Wyler. 'The Robomen know about the warehouse.'\n

\nThat definitely seemed to worry Wyler. 'Are you sure?'\n

\n'There was a Roboman waiting for me,' David confirmed. 'I had to kill him.' He shrugged. 'And then these other two arrived. I didn't know who they were so I came out the back way.'\n

\n'Please get my grandfather,' Susan pleaded.\n

\nDavid Campbell looked at the girl for a long moment. It would be dangerous. There would be Robomen everywhere. Should he risk his life for people he didn't know? \n

\nThat was the stupidest question he had asked in a long time.\n

\nBut then, wasn't that exactly what people did? They helped each other. Wasn't that why they were all fighting?\n

\n'I'll try,' he said.\n

\nDavid wasn't surprised when Wyler protested. 'No, it's too dangerous.'\n

\nDavid appreciated the older man's concern. Despite his rough exterior Wyler was a man who cared about his friends and always tried to protect them. David liked the big Scot a good deal,

but in this case he would disappoint his friend. 'I'll try,' he repeated, and hurried back towards the stairs.\n

\n'Thank you,' the older of the two newcomers said, but David had already turned a corner and was out of sight.\n

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\nAfter a good five minutes of searching, Dr Who had finally made a discovery. A familiar handkerchief lay discarded among the bricks.\n

\n'This is Louise's,' he said to Tom. 'I remember buying it for her.' He rubbed the thin cotton between his fingers. 'It's wet. Perhaps Louise was bathing Susan's ankle.'\n

\nTom immediately saw Dr Who's train of thought. 'They might be down by the river.'\n

\n'Indeed,' Dr Who said, shoving the handkerchief into a pocket. He indicated for Tom to lead the way and the young policeman was happy to do as he was asked. He just wanted to find the girls and go.\n

\n'Susan,' Dr Who called. 'Susan?' There was no reply. 'Susan?'\n

\n'Behind you!' a man's voice shouted, making both Tom and Dr Who spin. \n

\nBehind them, two men dressed in the same one-piece coverall and helmet uniform as the dead man they had found in the warehouse were turning ferocious-looking futuristic rifles to aim at the young man who stood on top of a crumbling wall. He had obviously been the one who had called to them.\n

\nThe weapons whined as their power built. A second later the wall just below the place where the young man had been standing erupted in a shower of bricks and plaster. Thankfully, the dark haired young man had already thrown himself away from the wall.\n

\nTom and Dr Who didn't wait to see what happened. There was nothing they could do against weapons as powerful as that. Tom led the way to the shore. If they could make their way along the shore they might find enough cover to shelter behind until they found steps back up to street level. He turned to catch the older man's arm and lead him along the shore but Dr Who was staring into the water with horror.\n

\n'Daleks?' he said in disbelief.\n

\nTom turned. Rising from the water was some kind of mechanical or robot creature. It was roughly five and a half feet high and conical. Its bottom half was covered with hemispheres arranged on a series of angled panels while the top half was made up of slats and grilles and had three distinctive rods or arms.\n

\nDr Who was still staring at it. 'Daleks,' he repeated in horror.\n

\nSlowly, inexorably, the Dalek moved closer, water pouring down its gleaming shell. Slowly, it turned what could only be a gun towards them.\n

CHAPTER THREE

Prisoners of the Daleks

The Dalek continued towards Dr Who and Tom as it rose out of the Thames.

'Run,' Dr Who whispered under his breath. 'Run!' he said again, far more forcibly this time.

Tom had already turned to run but the two men in those sinister black uniforms were almost on them. Both men had their weapons aimed squarely at Tom and Dr Who.

'Take the prisoners to the spaceship.' The lights on top of the Dalek-thing's dome flashed as it spoke. Tom had never heard a voice like it before. A flat, grating monotone devoid of any kind of warmth or humanity. Even if Dr Who's expression hadn't said as much, from that soul-less voice alone Tom would have known that these Daleks were utterly evil. 'Move!' the Dalek screeched.

Covered by the weapons wielded by these two men in black uniforms, Tom picked his way from shore back across the broken bricks that littered the ground. He caught Dr Who's arm to help the old fellow. Tom wondered how Dr Who knew the Daleks but the old boy was in no mood to talk with him. He was shaking his head and muttering to himself.

What worried Tom most was that this remarkable old lad who travelled through time and space as easily as if he was popping to the local shop for a pint of milk and a loaf of bread was utterly horrified to see the Daleks. How terrible must these Dalek things actually be if they could terrify a man like this so much?

Tom shuddered and wished he hadn't thought of that question.

The two men in black, their faces never showing any kind of expression, marched Tom and Dr Who on.

In the distance Tom saw more Daleks gliding among the ruins. What had happened to London was clear now. These Daleks had invaded. Whether it was only London, only England or the whole world, there was no way of knowing.

'Intercept escaping human in river area.'

A report of the man who had tried to help the Daleks' two new captives had been sent quickly to the central control of the Daleks, which had immediately relayed the orders out to all Daleks patrolling the area.

'Intercept escaping human in river area,' all of the Daleks chorused.

The Daleks moved methodically, sweeping the area, scanning for movement, for the recognisable alien shape of a human. Every inch of the landscape came under their scrutiny before they moved on, convinced that the human must be fleeing ahead of them. A Dalek couldn't conceive of a human being able to outwit them. These creatures were only human.

\nOn the shattered first floor of what had once been a prosperous row of houses and businesses a battered fridge door open and David Campbell peered out. He had waited long enough for the Daleks and those damned Robomen of theirs to be long gone. Unfortunately that meant the two men he had come to save were also gone, too. Well, there was nothing he could do about that now. Dropping from the first floor to the ground, David began carefully making his way back to the Underground station.\n

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\nErnest Dortmun was a lie. \n

\nHe was the most important man in London's Resistance movement against the Daleks but only he knew this single truth. He was a fake.\n

\nEric Peters had been born into a nothing family down near the coast in Kent. His parents were nondescript and average and had lived in a nondescript and average village doing nondescript and average jobs. Eric was their only child and from an early age he had recognised that his parents were the living embodiment of mundane. Even though travel to all parts of the world was available now almost instantly through the global transmat network or by hypersonic trains and aircraft for traditionalists, Eric's parents rarely even left their village. They were happy there.\n

\nEric dreamed of more. Since the moment he recognised his parents as ordinary, Eric dreamed of being extraordinary. He wanted to be an explorer crewing one of the ships charting the asteroid belt or one of the colonists building the new settlements on Mars. He studied hard, gained good qualifications and went to university. Leaving home was like breathing – really breathing – for the first time. Every experience was different. He lived in a student apartment block sharing facilities with people he didn't know and often didn't like. He cooked for himself, ate when he wanted, studied on his own schedule and set out on the real quest of university life – discovering who he was and what his future held.\n

\nThat was when Eric Peters suffered the most crushing disappointment of his life. For all his dreams of greatness, all of his aspirations to do something extraordinary and ground-breaking, Eric discovered that he was quite average. Certainly he was more intelligent than most and he was a talented molecular chemist, but he was no more intelligent than most of the other students around him.\n

\nHe was intelligent, not unattractive and he had the prospects of a good life ahead of him – but only a good life, not a great one, not an extraordinary one.\n

\nThe realisation that he was never going to make a great breakthrough or lead humanity to an amazing new future burned Eric and it scarred his psyche. He took good, well-paying jobs with various scientific organisations and companies but his heart was never in them and he changed jobs regularly. He fell into a marriage which lasted an average length of time before his bitterness drove Beth to leave him for a woman she worked with. \n

\nEric moved again, this time to work at Dortmun Tomorrows. He thought the name was a stupid one for a company but the money was good and it was far enough from the house he had

shared with Beth that he would never see her again and more importantly, none of the people who knew what had happened would see him and laugh at him about it.\n

\nDortmun Tomorrows was almost exactly what Eric had always wanted. It worked across a dozen different scientific disciplines ranging from geology and archaeology to medical advances out to space exploration. Ernest Dortmun was a man of insatiable curiosity and he pursued all of his different interests with passion, backing that interest with his vast financial resources.\n

\nEric finally saw the life he had always wanted – and Ernest Dortmun was living it.\n

\nBitterness seethed in Eric. He did his job, trying to be noticed for how good he was but even when he was complimented somehow it simply felt like an insult, the world stinging him again. He began to hate Ernest Dortmun for his advances, for his successes, for his philanthropy. He hated Dortmun for being a recluse. Nobody ever saw him. He was just too busy to meet people. He was too busy to meet Eric.\n

\nEric hated Dortmun.\n

\nBitterness ate through Eric until it threatened to be all that was left, and then something extraordinary happened.\n

\nThe Daleks attacked.\n

\nThe assault came in stages but within a short time it was clear that the world was in ruins, billions were dead, the entire infrastructure of the planet destroyed. Dortmun Tomorrows had been one of the first places destroyed by the early barrages. Eric missed being killed because he was late for work. Had he been on time it was likely that he would have been fired for being late again. As it turned out, being late saved his life.\n

\nAs the world descended in chaos and then became an occupied territory peopled by a terrified slave population when the Daleks landed, humanity looked for a hero. The worldwide computer networks were gone, information was passed at best by analogue lines or more often by messenger. Nobody knew how average Eric Peters was. Nobody knew who he was either. He assumed that nobody would listen if a mundane molecular chemist from a lab tried to lead them.\n

\nBut what if Ernest Dortmun the great scientist and business leader was among them?\n

\nNobody knew Eric and nobody knew what Dortmun looked like. They had no way of finding out either.\n

\nEric Peters became Ernest Dortmun. His scientific knowledge was streets ahead of anyone else in the Resistance. They were good people but none of them had his education. It was right that he should lead them.\n

\nIn those early days he oversaw the Resistance's move into the tunnel fortresses that had been built among the London Underground centuries before and then later restored when the threats of World War Three had loomed.\n

\nThey were deep underground, far from the instruments of the Daleks and the prying eyes of their Robomen slaves. In those early days the Resistance raided shops for supplies, venturing

out to military bases and scientific establishments for anything they might use to fight back. Eric – or Dortmun as he now thought of himself – worked hard, creating weapons to fight the Daleks. He invented a radio scrambler which would cut Robomen off from their Dalek masters and render them confused and easy to kill. It had lasted only a few days before the Daleks worked around it but it had been a success, the first success the Resistance had managed and Eric/Dortmun was, for the first time in his life, a hero.

He raided libraries, taking books on military tactics, splitting his time between experiments and learning the subtleties of war from the writings of great warriors. His energy was ferocious. Even being caught in the collapse of a shopfront when it was blasted didn't stop him. It had cost him the use of his legs and put him in a wheelchair but that didn't matter. It would simply make his achievement all the greater.

Eric Peters, the man once destined to be forever average, was going to be the man who saved humanity from the Daleks.

The occupation stretched on, food became scarcer, numbers in the Resistance dwindled as some died and others chose to leave the city attempting to find a safer haven in the less patrolled open spaces of Scotland or on the European mainland. Eric's – no, he was just Dortmun now – Dortmun's confidence never wavered. He would defeat the Daleks. He had been working on a new bomb, more powerful than anything they had liberated from military stores. His expert knowledge as a chemist was responsible for the breakthrough. The trigger mechanism on the casing was the only concern now, but he was working on that and it was almost complete. He had obtained the books and papers he needed to understand and overcome the problem and he was almost there. The test triggers were ready to be installed.

He was within touching distance of achieving Earth's liberation... of achieving greatness.

Despite his non-stop schedule of work, Dortmun was always visible in the Underground base, encouraging others to keep believing, to keep working, whether that work was scavenging tinned food from shops or making sure the base's weapons were cleaned, oiled and in full working order. He was a constant presence, a limitless source of energy, encouragement and inspiration as he wheeled his chair between the rows of benches like a general striding among his troops before battle.

Dortmun was on one of these troop-rousing drives when a light flashed on the wall by the door and an alarm buzzed. That meant someone had operated the secret door mechanism on the outside of the door in the Underground's corridor. He gripped his machine gun and heard half a dozen others do the same.

The door slid open and the familiar figure of Wyler stepped inside followed by Ralph, who was carrying a girl of around eleven Dortmun had never seen before. Bringing up the rear was another newcomer, a young woman in her early twenties and pretty enough if that was of interest, he supposed.

The door closed quickly behind them and locked securely slid into place.

\n'New recruits, Wyler?' Dortmun asked.\n

\n'I found them down by the river,' the Scotsman answered.\n

\nThe older of the newcomers was wearing a sort of retro tweed outfit. That had been in fashion among the wealthy agricultural set before the invasion hadn't it? She had obviously come in from somewhere rural. The roads were gone and Wyler had been patrolling by the river. That meant only one thing.\n

\n'Come down in a boat, eh?' Dortmun said. 'But you couldn't get through so you're stuck in London.' The woman didn't disagree. Dortmun continued, pleased that his deductions had been correct, 'Well, we can use you. You'll be safe here.'\n

\nAn ancient radio set pinged an alarm. It was set for the frequency the Daleks used to broadcast to the survivors hiding out in the capital. Dortmun spun and hurried towards the set.\n

\nA Dalek's voice came out of the old radio. The set's age made the voice hiss and crackle. It sounded even more alien than usual. 'Attention. Attention. Survivors of London, the Daleks are the masters of Earth.'\n

\nThe young girl seemed shocked by the alien voice. 'The Daleks?' Perhaps it was the first time she had heard one of them speak, Dortmun thought. \n

\nThe Dalek continued, 'Surrender now and you will live. Resist and you will be exterminated. Show yourselves in the streets immediately and obey the orders of your masters, the Daleks.'\n

\nDortmun pushed himself away from the radio and turned to look at the faces of the Resistance. They had all heard the broadcast. They looked pale and nervous as they always did after the Daleks made one of their announcements. 'Obey motorised dustbins?' he said defiantly. 'We'll see about that.' He pushed himself back among the people, showing that the Dalek's words meant nothing to him. 'Good,' he told the nearest man, 'keep that gun well oiled. We'll show them who the masters are.' He stopped at a work bench. Dozens of identical metal casings sat on the bench. The casings for his new bombs. The bombs that would drive the Daleks from the Earth.\n

\nDortmun bombs.\n

\n'Yes, we'll show them,' he said.\n

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\nLouise hadn't liked anything about this mad Wyler had called Dortmun. He had a dangerous fire in his eyes – arrogance and a lack of willingness to listen. He had made assumptions about Susan and herself and hadn't waited to hear the facts. From everything she had heard about the Daleks from her grandfather and Susan as well as from her cousin Barbara and Barbara's new fiancé, Ian, there was no way a small group like this would defeat an invasion force of Daleks – especially with a zealot like Dortmun in charge.\n

\n'Daleks?' Louise asked Susan quietly. 'I thought you all said...'\n

\n'I know,' Susan agreed. She sounded confused and frightened. 'I don't understand either.'\n

\nLouise had known Susan all of the younger girl's life. She knew that Susan's fear was more for Dr Who. Louise had, naturally, known her uncle longer than Susan had, and she knew exactly how resourceful he was behind that bumbling façade he showed the world. But if Susan and the others had been even close to accurate about how dangerous these Daleks were, her uncle would need their help.\n

\nTaking Susan's hand, Louise hurried back to the door they had come in through. She ran her hands around the door, searching for some kind of release mechanism.\n

\n'Hey,' Wyler's gruff voice came from behind them. 'What's going on?'\n

\nSusan answered before Louise had the chance to reply. 'We can't stay here. We must go.'\n

\nWyler shook his head firmly. 'Don't be silly, you can't go out there.' He pointed a grimy finger back into the Resistance base. 'You're safe here.'\n

\n'But what about the others outside,' Louise asked reasonably.\n

\nWyler humphed. 'Stop worrying. They're sure to be all right.' He didn't sound as if he was even trying to be convincing.\n

\nSusan wasn't going to be put off. 'But it's my grandfather,' she protested.\n

\n'It's no good,' Wyler argued stubbornly. 'The streets will be crawling with Daleks.'\n

\n'What's this?' Louise turned. She hadn't seen Dortmund wheel himself over to join them. She didn't like him being part of this conversation.\n

\n'There's another two of them out there,' Wyler said gruffly.\n

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\nDortmun turned and wheeled himself away through into the small office he had commandeered for himself. Space may have been of a premium, but he was leader and that earned him some privileges. 'There's nothing we can do for them. I'm sorry.' He wasn't aware that he didn't sound even slightly sincere. \n

\nThe young woman in tweed still had plenty of fight in her. She followed Dortmund into his office. 'But what's going to happen to them?'\n

\n'No-one's absolutely certain,' Dortmund admitted, stopping and spinning his wheelchair to face the young woman. The girl had followed the woman into the office. His office. 'They've turned the whole of Bedfordshire into a giant mining area. If you want my best scientific guess, based on the little information we have, I'd say they're burrowing right down to the Earth's core, but I don't know why.' Dortmund looked at some papers, pretending to be fascinated by them. He didn't like having to admit that he didn't know something. He liked looking people in the face while he was making that admission even less. If he was engrossed in work immediately after admitting he didn't know something, people would have confidence that he was working on finding the answer.\n

\n'They'll blow this planet to bits before they're finished,' Wyler growled from the doorway.\n

\nDortmun spun away from the papers. 'Do you think we'll let them?' he roared angrily at Wyler. 'They've bombarded us with meteors and asteroids ripped out of our asteroid belt, subjected us

to cosmic rays, smashed our cities, destroyed whole continents of people.' He shook his head. 'Some of us they've turned into living dead.' The young woman in tweed looked confused. Maybe some horrors hadn't made it to rural communities yet. 'Robomen,' he explained. 'Men and women who have their minds and personalities wiped clean until they're just puppet soldiers for the Daleks. They're used to augment patrols and go where the Daleks can't.' The young woman looked rightfully disgusted by the description of the Robomen and Dortmun continued. 'Thousands of others are working and dying inside their mine.' Now he had shown the scale of the horror facing them, Dortmun strove to lift their spirits, to give them hope. 'But I tell you this, Wyler. The wheel is turning full circle. Our day is coming.'

The big Scot looked and sounded unconvinced. 'Aye. Maybe.'

Dortmun scowled at the Scot in irritation. Wyler was a good man, a brave, reliable fighter in his war with the Daleks but his constant negativity affected others around him. Dortmun had talked to him about it before. They needed to be positive, to show the rest of their group that they were confident of victory. He would have to talk to Wyler about it again, more forcefully, this time.

Dortmun's irritation was interrupted by the flashing light and the alarm which signified that the door was opening. He heard the sound of guns being picked up in the shelter.

Everyone relaxed as the door slid open and young David Campbell entered. Dortmun liked David. He was a ruthless fighter and he was one of the few who seemed to be able to really get to Wyler.

David made his way to the two newcomers. 'I was just too late,' he said to the woman in tweed. 'They were both captured and taken to one of the flying saucer's landing spots. The one in Sloane Square.'

'What will the Daleks do with them,' the woman asked.

David shook his head. 'I don't know. I'm sorry.'

CHAPTER FOUR

In the Belly of the Spaceship

The Dalek spaceship was every bit as impressive up close as it had looked as it flew across the skies of London. Steam seeped from its engine ports as they cooled after flight. A ramp had descended from the ship's underside into the clearing that had once been a famous London landmark. Now it was a space that had been cleared just enough for the ship to land, surrounded by the shattered and broken shopfronts of what had once been thriving businesses. Now their windows were black and dead, their roofs and walls collapsed and piles of rubble filled the streets in front of them. Daleks and Robomen patrolled the area, perfectly at home among the devastation.

Tom Campbell and Dr Who were among a dozen male prisoners being marched towards the ramp by four armed Robomen. Tom had found the name given to the human soldiers of the Daleks from one of his fellow prisoners before one of the Robomen had cuffed him behind the ear with the butt of his gun to stop Tom from talking.

Dr Who, however, was not put off. 'I do not understand it,' he said quietly, 'the Daleks were destroyed. I was there. I saw it happen.'

Tom leaned closer. 'When was this?'

'Well, I don't know,' Dr Who admitted. 'Tardis took us by accident to the Dalek planet, Skaro.' He shook his head uncertainly, looking with interest at the rubble-strewn ground. 'But perhaps that was sometime in the future. Those Daleks could only travel on metal, but there are...'

The arrival of two additional Robomen, shoving a pair of tired and dispirited prisoners covered in cuts and bruises cut Dr Who off in mid-sentence. The Robomen reported to a red and silver Dalek, which seemed to be in command, at least of the operations around the spaceship.

The Roboman's voice was dull and lifeless. 'These men killed the other two men in my patrol.'

The red Dalek answered quickly. 'Then you shall replace them,' it grated at the two captives. 'Join the other prisoners.' Its eye stalk swung to the Robomen. 'Continue with your patrol.'

The two prisoners approached the group containing Tom and Dr Who. One of the men seemed completely broken and defeated. The other, the taller of the two, still had defiance in his face.

'We have to make a break,' Tom heard the taller one say. 'Once they get us on board that spaceship we're done for.'

'There is no hope,' his friend answered miserably.

The taller of the men was already moving. 'Watch me.' He darted through a gap between two Robomen, knocking them both to the ground, and sprinted for the nearest building. He leaped,

catching the side of a broken wall and pushing himself upwards. He climbed fast, using the uneven exposed bricks as hand and footholds.\n

\n'No, Thomson, don't!' his friend bellowed but the fleeing man was already committed to his escape attempt.\n

\nA Roboman pushed past Tom and raised its weapon. The gun pulsed, releasing a bolt of energy. The fleeing Thomson scrambled up to the first floor and ducked behind a wall just in time. The weapon blasted a chunk out of the masonry but Thomson was unhurt. He was on his feet and running again, passing the remains of windows and broken gaps in the wall. \n

\nTom could see the man's plan of escape. There was a broad metal girder running to the adjacent building. If Thomson made it across that girder he would be into a building which looked deep and sturdy enough for him to put distance between himself and the Dalek spaceship. \n

\nWithout slowing, Thomson ran onto the girder. He was two steps away from being across when the Roboman fired again. The shot struck the girder, the blast lifted Thomson from his feet. He landed hard, hitting his side on the girder before toppling, spinning and flailing towards the ground. He tore through an ancient awning and landed hard on a broken pile of bricks. There was a horrific cracking sound and a scream of pain. Thomson clutched at his broken leg.

Despite his injury he struggled to force himself upright, still trying to flee.\n

\nIt was too late.\n

\nThree Daleks, led by the red Dalek, had surrounded Thomson. 'Exterminate!' the red Dalek screeched. 'Exterminate!'\n

\nThe three Daleks fired and pulses of energy engulfed Thomson. Thomson's body twitched and shook as the weapons burned his cells. The air around Thomson turned to steam as the moisture in the atmosphere was superheated and boiled.\n

\nInstinct made Tom want to move, to find a way to help, but Dr Who put a heavy restraining hand on the young policeman's shoulder. He shook his head, his old face frozen with anger. 'It's too late.'\n

\nThomson's struggles ceased and his charred remains were still.\n

\nThe red Dalek turned away from the dead escapee. 'Prisoners will proceed into the ship,' it said in that inhuman voice. 'Any further resistance will be deal with in the same way.'\n

\nThe men, most of them hungry, weak, tired and utterly broken, were herded up the ramp into the Dalek ship, their every move covered by Daleks and half a dozen Robomen. \n

\nGlancing back Tom wondered if he would ever see daylight again.\n

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\nHard work was demanded of everyone in the Resistance shelter. Food was scarce and nobody was allowed to eat unless they earned their keep. While Wyler showed a group how to keep antique machine guns oiled and cleaned for action, and Dortmun wheeled through the benches issuing encouragement, David Campbell had taken Louise and Susan under his wing.

Now they were helping him with the final stages of assembly for Dortmund's bombs. Pressure pins were inserted into the top of the bombs, which were shaped like stubby rockets whose top cone had been sheared off. The pressure pins were activated with a twist. Once the bomb landed they registered a sudden pressure and detonated. While simple, Dortmund had assured everyone it would be effective.

'Like this,' David said, showing Louise again how to insert the pin.

'I've got it,' she nodded, slipping the pin into place.

Both Louise and Susan had been quick learners. David had looked after them out of a sense of guilt. If he had approached the two men in the warehouse or if he had moved faster and got back to them in time, these two girls wouldn't be left wondering what would happen to their... the younger girl had called the old man her grandfather. Was that another family David had failed to save? How many families did the Daleks have to destroy before it was enough? How many families did he have to watch be shattered by the Daleks while he just kept on living? There were times he wished he could just walk in front of a Dalek and Roboman so that it would all be over. One shot would be all it took. Then there would be no more dreams when he closed his eyes. He wouldn't see the twisted bodies when he tried to sleep, no more screaming innocents burning in his nightmares. There would be no more guilt that he was alive and they weren't.

There were times David Campbell dreamed of death.

No, he wasn't ready to die. He wasn't done with death yet. They had unfinished business. He was going to do everything he could to fight the Daleks. Fight them, kill them and force them off of his planet. If that meant killing Robomen, then so be it. He took no satisfaction from killing Robomen but there was no choice. Their brains were wiped and reprogrammed, and according to Dortmund there was no way to reverse the process. The Robomen were programmed to follow Dalek instructions to kill or subjugate humans. In any real sense they were dead already. All he was doing was putting them out of their misery. It was like putting down a rabid dog.

So why did he still dream of Robomen screaming when he slept?

David realised Louise was looking at him with expectant eyes. She had asked a question and was waiting for an answer but he had completely missed the question. 'I'm sorry?'

'How long will the saucer stay on the ground?' Louise repeated.

David inspected her latest effort at inserting the pressure pin. It was perfect. 'Until they've got enough prisoners to take to the mine, I suppose,' answered.

The younger girl, Susan, asked, 'Do they take them all to the mine?'

'Yes, of course,' David answered, just too quickly. Louise's eyebrows raised. She knew he wasn't being entirely honest. 'Well, look,' he said, 'I've never been inside the saucer. How do I know?'

'Is that where they Robotise the prisoners?' Susan asked.

Why had she had to ask that? He could have dealt with it from Louise. The fact that it was a kid asking... that made it worse.

\n'Yes,' he answered.\n

\nThey all fell quiet and went back to work. There was nothing any of them could say to make anyone feel better.\n

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\nOnce on board the Dalek saucer, the captives had been split into smaller groups. Tom and Dr Who had dropped towards the rear of the final group of nine in the hope that they might spot some chance for escape. However, with narrow corridor and both Daleks and Robomen on duty, nothing had presented itself.\n

\nThe shutter covering a door by the Dalek at the front of the party slid upwards. 'First three prisoners,' it grated, and three tired and beaten men staggered into the cell before the shutter slid down, sealing them inside. 'Next three prisoners.' The next door along slid up and three more captives were pushed inside before the door slid down. \n

\n'Forward, last three prisoners.' The red Dalek, which definitely seemed to be their leader, rasped out.\n

\nDr Who stared at the red Dalek with contempt before reluctantly entering the cell, followed by Tom and the man who had been captured alongside the unfortunate Thomson. After much coaxing he had introduced himself only as "Craddock".\n

\nThe cell was small, perhaps six feet by five feet and had no furniture. It was just a metal box and once the door slid down, the three men were sealed inside it.\n

\nThe red Dalek's voice came through a speaker high in the cell's wall. 'All Daleks return to central control immediately.'\n

\nThe Dalek's words immediately brought Dr Who to life. 'They're going,' he said with barely controlled excitement. 'Now if they've only left the exit ramp down...'\n

\n'Do you think they're just going to let you walk out?' Craddock asked sarcastically.\n

\nDr Who ignored the man's defeated tone. 'Turn out your pockets, both of you,' he told his cellmates. \n

\n'How are you going to get the door open?' Craddock demanded. His spirit seemed utterly broken and Dr Who's unwillingness to accept their defeat appeared to irritate him.\n

\n'I'll show you if I can find what I need,' Dr Who snapped.\n

\nTom's uniform jacket was inside Tardis, but he dug through his trouser pockets. 'I've got some loose change and a pen.'\n

\nDr Who shook his head vigorously in disappointment. 'I need something non-conductive.'\n

\nTom fished a small, plastic comb from his shirt pocket. 'I've got a comb here, Doctor.'\n

\nDr Who plucked the comb from Tom's grasp with glee and hurriedly inspected it. 'Yes, I believe that will do the trick nicely.' He quickly turned to examine the door. 'Excellent.' He wafted the comb around the edge of the door. 'These doors are closed by magnetics. All we have to do is break the two poles.'\n

\n'Is that all?' Craddock sneered.\n

\n'Oh, yes,' Dr Who said cheerily. 'It is quite simple.' He ran his finger along the bottom of the door until he found a ridge. 'Here.' He started pushing Tom's comb under the door. 'We have to force our comb in here.'\n

\nWith a surprising show of strength Dr Who managed jam the comb into place, breaking the connection. A second later the door silently slid upwards and the three captives hurried out into the corridor. \n

\n'Come along,' Dr Who said urgently, hustling his companions out of their cell and back along the corridor, retracing the route they had taken as they were taken to their cell.\n

\nAs Tom reached the intersection at the end of the corridor, a blue and grey drone Dalek glided into view, blocking their escape.\n

\n'Back,' Dr Who called, running towards the opposite end of the corridor.\n

\nThe red Dalek silently moved into position blocking that end of the corridor, trapping the three escapees.\n

\nDr Who's shoulders slumped. 'Back in the cell?'\n

\n'Stay where you are,' the red Dalek rasped. 'You have passed the intelligence test by escaping.'\n

\nDr Who's chin rose defiantly. 'And what are you going to do with us?'\n

\nThe Dalek's eye stalk moved to inspect each of its prisoners before settling on Dr Who. It paused long enough to give the impression that it was relishing its words. 'You will be Robotised.' It swung, pointing along an adjacent corridor. 'Move.'\n

\nThere was no alternative other than to comply. Dr Who led his small party away. He fumed silently with himself for not anticipating that the Daleks would have had something planned. From the little he had seen of these Robomen, he had no doubt that it was a fate every bit as bad as death. From the looks on their faces it was clear that Tom and Craddock felt exactly the same way.\n

\nThe red Dalek operated a control on the wall. Its voice echoed through the spaceship and beyond. 'Rebels of London, this is our final warning. Leave your hiding places.'\n

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\nThe red Dalek's voice was being listened to on the old radio set in the Underground shelter. The rebels had gathered to hear what their enemy had to say.\n

\n'Show yourselves in the streets. Work is needed from you but the Daleks offer you life. Soon we will destroy London completely and you will all die. This is your last chance to come out of your hiding places.'\n

\nWyler snorted and turned the ancient radio off.\n

\nDortmun had listened to the Dalek's words, devouring every word and feeling them feed his anger. 'We'll come out of our hiding places,' he promised, 'and we'll fight.' \n

\nThere was a rumble among the rebels.\n

\nDortmun wheeled himself through to his office. He had been formulating a plan for a few days.

It was simple but he had discovered from reading many books on military tactics that a simple strategy was often the most effective course of action. He picked up the blood-smeared helmet of a Roboman from his desk. It would need cleaned but getting that uniform had been vital. He spun to inspect the crate of his bombs – his Dortmund Bombs – which had been so carefully brought in for his inspection. They were perfect and they were finished just in time. He started packing bombs into a satchel when a shadow fell across the crate. Wyler and David had followed him into the office. Wyler closed the door. That meant they didn't want the others to hear what they had to say. Why didn't they just trust him? Why couldn't they just listen to him? He knew what he was doing.\n

\n'We can do it, Wyler,' he said firmly before the Scot could speak. He lifted one of his bombs. 'We can do it with these bombs.'\n

\nHe had been right about Wyler. As usual the big Scot was instantly negative. 'And how do we get close enough to throw them?' Wyler demanded. 'Show me. Come on, show me.'\n

\n'Would you rather we didn't try?' Dortmund retorted.\n

\n'Try?' Wyler snapped. 'Try – with people's lives?'\n

\nDortmund nodded forcefully. 'Why not?'\n

\n'Forget it.' Wyler turned and reached for the door.\n

\n'Wyler,' Dortmund called. As the big man turned, Dortmund threw the Roboman's helmet to him. The Scot looked at the helmet for a moment before David took the helmet and slid it onto his head. \n

\nDavid understood.\n

\nAfter a moment, understanding flickered on Wyler's face. Dortmund smiled in satisfaction. At last they understood. They understood why he was their leader.\n

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\nFollowing their attempted escape Tom and Dr Who, along with Craddock, had been taken to a room where they had been issued with those awful black uniforms which they wore over their own clothes. From there they were moved to an ante-room where they were held waiting in silence. From the room they could see into what the Daleks called the "Robotising Chamber". It was a final act of cruelty, forcing prisoners to watch others go through the process that was also to be their fate. A human's last minutes before being Robotised were spent watching others having their personalities and their humanity stripped away from them, and knowing that mere minutes later they themselves would also be these Dalek-controlled zombies.\n

\nTom could see that Dr Who hadn't given up hope. The old scientist was concentrating furiously. Tom could almost see the calculations running through the old boy's mind. Craddock, on the other hand, had dead eyes. He had accepted defeat and was ready for the end.\n

\n'Songs, lad,' Dr Who said quietly. 'Songs, poems, books, newspaper reports, your football team's starting eleven from five years ago. Run through your memories. Dig deep for the buried memories. That may defeat their infernal machine.'\n

Tom did as he was told. He could remember most of the songs in the current hit parade. That wouldn't do him any good. LPs might be the thing. Some of the songs on LPs weren't so well known. What LPs did he listen to? A Hard Day's Night. No, everybody knew the songs on that. Remembering them wouldn't be so hard. What about the Rolling Stones? The album they'd named after themselves... that was all old blues songs. Remembering them would be harder. Bob Dylan. He'd bought Another Side of Bob Dylan the year before. There were songs on that he could never remember the lyrics to. He could fight to dredge those from his memory. It was Billy Clayborn who'd got him listening to Bob Dylan. He'd gone to primary school with Billy Clayborn. Who else had he gone to school with? Who else had been with them in that first year at primary school? Could he remember any of their names? Could he remember their faces? He had to try.

The hum of energy in the Robotising Chamber subsided and the three men who had entered the alcoves a few minutes earlier with terror on their faces now stood impassively. What looked like the sort of hairdryers they had in hairdressers sat over their heads. As these devices lifted, Tom saw that each of the men was now wearing a Roboman's helmet. Their faces were dead and devoid of personality.

'Robotising process completed,' a Dalek grated from its position observing the control panel. A second Dalek was covering the Robomen with its weapon in case they had broken free during the process. 'Release them.' The restraints holding the men in place slid away and the three Robomen stepped forward in unison. 'Obey the Daleks without question,' the Dalek said. All three men spoke with dead voices. 'We obey without question.'

'Patrol sector three near this spaceship,' the Dalek commanded.

With the slow, deliberate steps of the dead, the Robomen walked away to obey their orders. 'Move into the Robotising Chamber,' the Dalek guarding Tom's group instructed. They were forced into the Robotising Chamber in single file. As they went in they passed the newly programmed Robomen. Tom thought hard about making a break. He didn't want to wind up like those poor devils. They weren't alive anymore. They weren't people anymore. Better to be killed trying to escape than wind up like them.

Could he leave the Doctor?

And what if the old boy was right? What if they could fight this programming thing? If he could fight the Daleks in any way he would.

'Move into the compartments,' the Dalek at the control panel ordered. Despite the flat, mechanical tone it somehow sounded as if it was going to enjoy their suffering. 'Move!' it repeated.

Craddock moved into the first niche, Dr Who took the second and Tom took the final alcove. Dr Who was examining everything quickly, his eyes taking in every detail. He glanced quickly at Tom. 'Remember what I said, lad.'

Tom nodded. What song was hardest to remember? Definitely one of Bob Dylan's. His first

class at school. He had to remember them too.\n

\n'Prepare Robotising process,' a Dalek said. Its gun never wavered from being aimed at the captives. \n

\nTom heard controls being operated and felt the vibration of the hairdryer-like apparatus being lowered before it came into view and slid down, covering his face.\n

\nConcentrate. Think of Bob Dylan. Start with the LP. What did it look like? What was the sleeve?\n

\nHe felt the first touch of Dalek programming. It felt like his brain was tingling.\n

\nIgnore it. Think of Bob Dylan.\n

\nThe tingling increased.\n

\nThink of the cover. What did it look like? It was white. A vertical black and white photograph of Dylan in the middle. Was he standing? Sitting? It looked a bit like both. He was standing with one foot raised, resting on something. The LP's title was on the left at the top. Each word got a row to itself.\n

\nWhat was on the other side of the picture?\n

\nThe tingling was starting to hurt.\n

\nIgnore it. Ignore it.\n

\nThe LP's title was on one side. A list of tracks on the other. Gold! They were in yellowy-gold letters.\n

\nIt hurt.\n

\nIgnore it.\n

\nThe song. Not It Ain't Me Babe. He knew that too well. The same for All I Really Want To Do. It had to be one he struggled to remember. My Back Pages. He had never understood that one. Why didn't he understand it? What was it about the words that confused him? What were the words?\n

\nCrimson flames tied through my ears...\n

\nPain screamed in his head. He ignored it. It didn't matter.\n

\nJust sing the song. Sing it and remember your first day at school. Remember your teacher. What was her name? She didn't stay long. Just a few months. Middle aged, short, plump, kind. What was her name? Mrs Timmons. \n

\nSing the song to her.\n

\nCrimson flames tied through my ears\n

\nRolling high and mighty traps...\n

\nWho else was in that class? Who else was there? There had been another Tom. What was his name? Tommy Boyle. His dad was... his dad was...\n

\nThe pain was agonising. His brain was burning.\n

\nIgnore the pain. What did Tommy Boyle's father do? Where did he work? Fish market! He was a porter at Billingsgate Fish Market. He occasionally made a few bob selling black market fish.

Now sing Billy the next line.\n

\nCountless with fire on flaming roads...\n

\nWho else was at school? Who was the girl who cried every morning? What was her name? He had to remember her. He had to remember them all. Remember them, remember the song, remember...\n

\nTom Campbell's mind exploded with pain.\n

\nCHAPTER FIVE\n

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\nAttack the Spaceship\n

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\nAnother band of miserable, hungry and broken humans was being marched towards the Dalek spaceship. One Roboman led the way with two more bringing up the rear. The captives all walked with heavy legs and slumped shoulders. None of them looked as if they had the spirit to attempt an escape.\n

\nA Dalek moved to intercept the prisoner. 'Halt.'\n

\n'We are taking the prisoners to the spaceship,' the lead Roboman said in a dull, flat voice.\n

\nThe Dalek moved aside and pushed the prisoner at the front of the column with its pincer arm. 'Continue.'\n

\n'I obey.' The Roboman continued on his way towards the spaceship's ramp with the prisoners following behind. The Dalek turned away and returned to its own patrol.\n

\nHad the Dalek remained where it was, it might have noticed that the three Robomen all wore uniforms showing bullet-holes or tears from a knife attack. It might also have seen that under their coats each of the two dozen prisoners carried a bulging satchel. Had it run the face of the lead Roboman through the Dalek databanks it would have found that no-one looking like this had been Robotised. However, in its mind the Dalek could not comprehend that anything as inferior as a human could be a threat. It also found that the majority of humans were difficult to decipher from each other.\n

\nBeneath the helmet of the leading Roboman, David Campbell surveyed the ramp and the level above. There only seemed to be one Dalek on guard. If they could get past that Dalek they could spread through the ship like a virus and do as much damage as Dortmun's bombs would let them. If they were even half as powerful as the scientist promised they would leave the flying saucer a buckled and burning husk in the heart of London... and it would be the beginning of the Daleks being kicked off of the Earth.\n

\n'Where did these prisoners come from?' the Dalek demanded.\n

\n'Sector Four,' David answered. He had heard Daleks and Robomen giving and receiving orders. They regularly patrolled Sector Four.\n

\nHis luck was out.\n

\n'No patrol has yet been allotted to sector Four,' the Dalek answered suspiciously. The Dalek's gun twitched towards David but he moved faster. He caught the Dalek's gun arm and swung the Dalek with all of his strength, sending it careering down the ramp. The prisoners scattered to clear a path for the Dalek. Out of control, the Dalek reached the bottom of the ramp. It slammed into a pile of bricks, toppling it onto its side revealing some kind of mechanical workings on its

underside. One of the rebels masquerading as a Robomen cracked his electronic whip against the Dalek's underside, striking the mechanism. The Dalek exploded.\n

\nA second later an alarm filled the air.\n

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\nThe alarm also filled the Robotising Chamber. A Dalek voice came in over the top of the alarm. 'General alert! All Daleks to ramp area. We are under attack. Emergency! Emergency!'\n

\nThe Dalek tasked with operating the control panel turned ready to speed towards the ramp area, all thoughts of the humans undergoing the Robotising process dismissed from its mind. If they died the Daleks could always find more humans to replace them. The red Dalek cut across its path. \n

\n'Do not halt the Robotisation,' the red Dalek said. 'Proceed.'\n

\nThe Dalek turned back to its control panel, seething at the prospect of not killing humans.\n

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\nUnder the Dalek apparatus, Tom Campbell fought furiously to hold on to his thoughts and his memories – to hold on to himself. \n

\nHe had gone through every song on Another Side of Bob Dylan and remembered every child in his first class at school. Now he was focusing on the blues songs on The Rolling Stones LP and the names of the people who had lived in all the terraced houses that first street he had lived in. Old people, young, people, people who died when he was young... he racked his memory, dredging up every face and name. Every moment he fought the pain increased but he refused to give in. He would fight as long as he could.\n

\nFrom somewhere he heard what sounded like an alarm and a Dalek's worried voice. The idea that something was going wrong for the Daleks encouraged Tom to redouble his efforts and keep fighting.\n

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\nThe rebels attacked with a fury. They scattered through the Dalek ship. David ran hard. A Roboman appeared in front of him, raising his weapon. David didn't slow, He threw the Bowie knife and plucked it from the chest of the Roboman before the Dalek puppet had hit the floor. He saw the shadow of a Dalek approaching two turnings ahead. He hurled one of Dortmund's bombs and took the first turning. He heard the explosion but didn't look back. He had to keep going. The others were trying to cause as much damage as they could. He had a different mission. \n

\nAt the next intersection he ducked past a Dalek that was being manhandled by three of his fellow rebels. The Dalek was screeching and screaming but they had it teetering on the verge of toppling. David kept running and turned a corner just in time to see Wyler and a few other running into a room.\n

\n'Here, David,' Wyler shouted. 'They're in here.'\n

\nDavid ran after Wyler, The three men who had toppled their Dalek were close behind.\n

\nTwo Daleks were under attack by the rebels. A blue and grey one was firing indiscriminately. They turned it and pushed it at a control panel. The Dalek blasted its own controls which in turn exploded, ripping the front of the Dalek apart. Three others were attacking a red Dalek. David ignored them. \n

\nHe had arrived just in time.\n

\nWyler was struggling to free the bands holding one of the men who had arrived with Louise and Susan. The old fellow Susan called her grandfather was in the middle piece of apparatus. David ran towards him and used his knife to prise the restraints free. The old man was disoriented and staggered but he hadn't been Robotised.\n

\n'Thank you, dear boy,' he flustered.\n

\n'Later,' David yelled, pulling the old man towards the door. 'Down. Keep your head down.' He looked back and saw Wyler struggling with the restraints across the young man who had accompanied this grandfather. 'Come on, Wyler.'\n

\n'Nearly there.' Wyler roared with effort and tore the restraints free from the young man. Both of the captives he had come for were now free and the young one was in safe hands. David hurried the old man back towards the ramp.\n

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\nTom Campbell's mind still screamed with pain. It was images of his childhood, guitar riffs, Bob Dylan's nasal voice... but he was free. He was running. He heard the alarm. Hands were helping him.\n

\nHuman hands.\n

\nHe forced himself to focus. A tall unshaven man with a slight limp and a pronounced Scottish accent was hurrying him along the corridor on the Dalek ship. The corridors were filled with the sounds of explosions, of Daleks guns and fighting. It took Tom a moment to realise that this was a jailbreak. That focused his mind even more clearly. Up ahead, Dr Who was being helped along by a young man also wearing a helmetless Roboman's uniform. The scientist was a bit dizzy looking but his eyes were clear and sharp. The Doctor and he had dodged being Robotised. The old boy's idea had worked. \n

\n'What about Craddock?' he asked the big Scot, whose young friend had called him Wyler.\n

\n'Who?'\n

\nTom pointed back over his shoulder. 'The other fella who was being Robotised. What happened to him?'\n

\nWyler shook his head. 'I tried. I couldn't get him out of that apparatus. He looked further into the process than you two.'\n

\nAbandoning Craddock didn't sit well with Tom but the place would be swarming with Daleks and Robomen before long. There was nothing he could do for the poor soul now.\n

\n'Louise said you two would survive,' Wyler said.\n

\n'Louise?' How did he know her? 'You met Louise?'\n

\nWyler nodded. 'Her and the kid. Susan's back at the base. Louise insisted on coming with us.'\n

\nTom was horrified. 'What? She's here?'\n

\n'Have you ever tried stopping her?' the Scot growled.\n

\nTom shook his head. 'No. Can't say as I have. Where is she?'\n

\n'Back at the ramp,' Wyler answered quickly. \n

\nA Dalek's voice blared through the corridor from some kind of public address system. 'All Robomen return to action. Destroy the invaders. Destroy invaders.'\n

\nWyler gave Tom a worried look. 'They've called up reinforcements. Hurry.'\n

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\nLouise had been forced away from the ramp by the fighting. She wasn't carrying any weapons and while she was perfectly capable of handling herself in unarmed combat she had no defence against the guns of the Daleks and their zombie Robomen. \n

\nShe had moved through the corridors, helping injured Rebels, binding their wounds, getting them back on their feet and back into the fight. She had barely avoided being caught by Robomen at least twice. The Dalek's announcement about bringing Robomen reinforcements made Louise think her luck might have run out.\n

\nOne of the rebels, a man named Benson who had said he had once been a schoolteacher, had been knocked unconscious. Louise had been trying to drag him to safety when the Dalek gave that order for more Robomen to enter the fray. Moments later she heard the rigid, stomping footsteps of approaching Robomen. She looked desperately for a place to hide Benson. As if releasing her from her obligation, Benson's last breath ebbed away and he slid to the floor, dead.\n

\nLouise ran. She had no idea where she was. The more she ran, the more likely she was to run into Robomen. If that happened, she didn't have a hope of surviving. \n

\nShe tried two doors which stayed resolutely closed before a third slid open and she hurried inside. She had just made it. Moments later the Robomen marched past Louise's hiding place. Looking around she saw that she had chosen a less than perfect bolt-hole. She was in a small store-room lined with equipment for Robomen. Uniforms, helmets, whips and guns filled every surface. If all else failed she might be able to disguise herself as a Roboman to escape. She doubted if the Daleks even noticed the difference in gender let alone differentiated by it.\n

\nThere were more footsteps somewhere ahead and she heard a dead voice. It had to be a Roboman.\n

\n'Rebels. Open fire.'\n

\nAn explosion in the corridor rocked Louise. She grasped desperately at the wall to stay upright but a second blast threw her sideways. Her head hit hard against the wall, and she slid to the floor, unconscious.\n

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\nHad Louise kept running for another ten yards instead of ducking into hiding she would have run into the party of escaping rebels which included Tom and her uncle.\n

\nAs soon as David and Wyler saw the approaching Robomen they threw Dortmund Bombs at the enemy. The blasts shook the corridor and threw the Robomen against walls. Blood smeared the bulkheads as the Dalek puppets slid to the floor.\n

\nThe Rebels didn't see. They were already running towards the ramp, unaware that their bombs had left Louise lying unconscious in a store room.\n

\nAs soon as the rebel group did reach the ramp it was clear that their attack was not going well and that the Daleks were successfully repelling the assault. The rebels had swept up any weapons from fallen Robomen and they fought with a fury borne of desperation but they were simply outnumbered. \n

\nBy accident or more likely by design, the Daleks were allowing the Robomen to take the majority of the action in subduing the rebellion. \n

\nTom looked around desperately trying to locate both Dr Who and Louise. He saw the Doctor almost immediately. He was standing next to the young man Wyler had called David. Tom blanched as he saw this David's arm draw back to hurl a brutal-looking Bowie knife in Tom's direction. It flew barely a foot past Tom's shoulder and slammed into the gut of a Roboman who toppled forward and rolled almost to David's feet.\n

\nTom nodded his thanks and indicated Dr Who. 'Get him out of here.'\n

\nDavid threw his satchel aside. 'I'm out of bombs anyway. Keep your head down and stick with Wyler. He knows where to go.' With that, David hustled Dr Who towards the side of the ramp and helped the old man drop the four feet to the ground below.\n

\nTom turned to see Wyler hurling a Roboman over the side from far higher on the ramp. The Roboman landed hard on his shoulder and neck, the horrific snapping on his neck audible even over the battle. \n

\nHe couldn't see Louise.\n

\n'Have you seen Louise?' he bellowed to Wyler. \n

\nThe Scot shook his head. 'Maybe she made a run for it.'\n

\n'Not without the Doctor.' Tom was sure Louise would never have come on the raid and then run without her uncle.\n

\nOne of the rebels caught Tom's shoulder. 'Pretty girl in tweed?' \n

\nTom nodded furiously. 'Yes.'\n

\nThe rebel pointed back into the saucer. 'I saw her in there, helping our injured. About two corridors along.'\n

\n'Where are you going?' Wyler's hand grabbed at Tom's sleeve but the young policeman pulled himself free.\n

\n'To get Louise.' Tom hurried up the ramp. 'Wait for us if you can,' he called back. 'If you can't we'll find our own way.'\n

\nTom heard Wyler shouting after him but he ignored the man's voice. He had to find Louise. She didn't belong on this terrible spaceship. None of them did but she was part of the group he was with. He had a responsibility for her. Besides, she had come to save him and he couldn't leave her after that.\n

\nA group of prisoners were ahead, running towards him. He recognised them as men he had been brought into the ship with.\n

\n'Have you seen a girl?' he demanded. 'She's wearing tweed. Have you seen a girl in tweed?'\n

\nThe men ignored him and ran. Their own interest was in their own freedom. Tom pushed through them. He knew roughly where she been.\n

\nHe hurried on. He was determined. He was going to find Louise. \n

\nHe had to find her.\n

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\nWyler watched Tom disappear back into the spaceship with disbelief. They'd risked everything to get him out and now the young idiot was going back in to look for a girl who was probably dead already. It was brave but it was stupid.\n

\nWell, to hell with him. Wyler had done all he could for the laddie. Now he had to do what he had come here to do in the first place. He was going to kill Daleks and blow up their ship.\n

\nThe plan had been simple. When they attacked the Dalek ship, some of their men had gone deep into the saucer and set the Dortmund Bomb by the engines, the fuel lines... anything that would detonate. The bombs were sensitive enough that when Wyler's team attacked the legs holding the ship up, the impact of the ship dropping would be enough to detonate the bombs and rip the ship apart.\n

\n'Come on.' Wyler hurried his team towards the legs to the right of the ramp. 'All right. Let them have it.' Wyler threw his bombs. Each one exploded against the ship's leg with a huge blast and a vast cloud of smoke and steam but after six explosions, the ship still stood. One of the men threw his satchel. The explosion threw them all flat, but the ship stood firm.\n

\n'Daleks!'\n

\nThey were being closed in by two lines of Daleks. In desperation the men threw their bombs at the approaching Daleks.\n

\nTwo, three, four explosions.\n

\nThe Daleks glided through them all unharmed. Their gun arms twitched and raised.\n

\nA horrible, cold realisation settled on Wyler. 'They're no good,' he yelled in warning. 'The bombs are no good. Run.'\n

\nTwo more explosions detonated near Wyler sending him reeling into a pile of bricks. He grabbed the opportunity to tumble behind the remains of a wall.\n

\nPeering from hiding he watched his comrades throwing their bombs. Half a dozen bombs exploded in front of a line of Daleks. They glided through the smoke. The men turned to run. The other line of Daleks had blocked their escape. The men cowered, raising their hands in

surrender, throwing their weapons away.\n

\nWyler knew it would make no difference.\n

\nOne Dalek's eye-stalk twitched and the lights on its dome flashed. 'Exterminate!'\n

\nBoth lines of Daleks opened fire, their weapons blasting the helpless men, searing them, burning their cells from inside to out. The extreme heat turned the air to steam. \n

\nThe Daleks chorused 'Exterminate!' over and over, exulting in the killing. \n

\nWyler slowly and quietly slipped further into the shadows. He would have to wait until there was a chance to slip away. He remained completely still in the near darkness.\n

\nWhen the Daleks finally turned away and the steam and smoke cleared Wyler tried not to look at what was left of his comrades. They hadn't been his friends. He had never let anyone in the group get that close. But he had eaten with them, slept in the same dormitories as them, heard their lives. He didn't want to see what the Daleks had done to them.\n

\nThough he could close his eyes to block the sight of the dead men, Wyler couldn't ignore the stench of charred flesh.\n

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\nDavid was surprised by just how sprightly this Doctor fellow was on his feet. He could have been aged anything between fifty and ninety and he had just survived the Robotising process but within a few minutes of getting out of the Dalek saucer he was easily keeping pace with David despite running with a ludicrous shuffling step.\n

\nDavid had no great plan in mind. All they could do was get back to the base in the Underground station and regroup there to make a decision on what to do next.\n

\nThe route David chose took them through some back alleys, over a couple of allotments and along some quiet streets. These were areas he knew Daleks patrolled less. Of course, after an attack, the Daleks were likely to be patrolling everywhere.\n

\nTheir luck ran out as David led Dr Who along past the ruins remains of what had once been the front of a DIY store. They were halfway to the next corner when a patrol of three Daleks sped around that very corner. \n

\n'Back,' David hissed.\n

\nThey turned quickly and ran. They could hear the Dalek voices behind them. If they could get to the next street ahead...\n

\nFour Daleks appeared at the end of that street. With solid walls on either side they were boxed in. David looked around desperately.\n

\nDr Who was also looking for an escape. He looked at the buildings, the debris... his eyes stopped, staring at the ground.\n

\nDavid saw it instantly. A heavy iron cover leading to a sewer. He used his knife to prise the cover open. Dr Who dropped in before the lid was fully raised and David followed quickly. He didn't bother waiting to pull the cover closed behind him. The Daleks would have melted it quickly enough anyway.\n

\nIn the dark with foul, stagnant water splashing around their feet the two men ran. They heard the Daleks open fire and felt the heat of their energy weapons as they blasted the air, but they had put enough distance between themselves and the Daleks.\n

\n'Lead the way, my boy,' Dr Who said quietly. 'No talking unless necessary. You never know what kind of sensor equipment the Daleks are using.'\n

\nDavid just nodded. What was the point of leading the way? There was nowhere left for them to go.\n

\nWyler had no idea how long he sat in the darkness, smelling the remains of his colleagues. Eventually, Robomen were sent to clear the dead, and to ensure that the attackers actually were dead. A few who were badly injured were despatched where they lay and their bodies carried away like last week's rubbish. \n

\nThe Dalek ship was unharmed. So were the Daleks. \n

\nWyler knew he had to get back to the Under-ground and then he had to get out of London. The Daleks had threatened to level what was left of the city. They would definitely carry through on the threat now. The Daleks would aim their heaviest weapons and reduce everything for tens of miles around to dust.\n

\nHe had to get out of the city.\n

\nHe didn't want to think how few would be making that desperate bid for safety.\n

\nAs darkness finally began to fall, and the Roboman patrols moved away, carrying the dead towards a pyre, Wyler eased out from his hiding place and slid away through the shadows.\n

CHAPTER SIX

Down among the Robomen

Tom Campbell had searched every part of the Dalek ship he had been able to access without finding any sign of Louise. She wasn't among the prisoners in the ship's holding cells. Each cell had a camera in it and he had been able to sneak into the observation room for a few minutes, just enough time to ascertain that she wasn't in the cells.

The ship was becoming busier, as if the Daleks were building up to something. Tom plucked the helmet from a dead Roboman and pulled it onto his own head. He killed his expression, adopting the lifeless neutral appearance of a Roboman.

He moved through the saucer with the same lifeless robotic gait as the other Robomen but behind his silver tint of his helmet's visor Tom's eyes searched every inch of the ship. There was no sign of Louise anywhere.

At one point he joined the back of a column of Robomen and followed them in case they might be heading towards a part of the ship he hadn't been able to access. Instead they were going on what passed for a rest period. The Robomen each collected a plastic plate of what looked like coloured pills before sitting rigidly on a bench to eat. Tom didn't see that he had any choice other than to eat or he would risk being caught. The pills tasted like the worst medicine a doctor ever prescribed but Tom guessed that they were concentrated protein.

As soon as they were finished eating, their heads dropped and they slid into a sleep period.

Tom thought about slipping away and continuing his search. Joining the column of Robomen had been a mistake. It had been a gamble and it hadn't paid off. Every minute he was among them he was in danger. But what if his motion in trying to ease away alerted the others that there was something different about him? No, he would have to wait. He would drop off the back of their column as they moved out. That was the only sensible path. He had to wait. He forced himself to relax. He couldn't fall asleep, just relax. In a situation like this how could he sleep anyway?

His eyes closed.

He wouldn't sleep... the lids were getting heavy.

The moment before sleep took him Tom wondered if there might have been something in the pills to make the Roboment drowsy...

A movement jolted Tom awake. The Robomen were moving away in two columns. He sprang to his feet and ran after them, dropping into step at the back of the column. How long had he been out? It felt like just a few seconds but it must have been longer. He felt refreshed and there was the beginnings of a stiffness in his neck from the way he had been sitting. What had he

missed when he was asleep? He cursed himself for his stupidity. \n

\nTom followed until the Robomen turned away a tight corner. Tom stopped marching and let them go. \n

\nHe had work of his own to do.\n

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\nThe Underground base was empty apart from Dortmun and the girl, Susan. Everyone else had gone on the attack against the Dalek ship. Of course, Dortmun had wanted to go but his wheelchair would have slowed the others down and got in the way during battle. His skills were obviously best used in this planning and leadership role. He created the bombs, he devised the strategy. That was what leaders did.\n

\nBeing left with the girl hadn't appealed to Dortmun. What did he know about children? What did he care about them? Of course he would have to take a different approach later, once the Daleks were defeated. If he was to lead at that point – and obviously as the man who drove the Daleks from Earth he would – he would have to be more statesmanlike, more of a politician. That would mean being nice to children and babies. But right now? This was war. He didn't have time to be a babysitter. It was just unfortunate luck that the girl had sprained her ankle.\n

\nIn fairness to the girl, she hadn't been any trouble. She had brought him food and water and generally stayed out of his way most of the time. She had rested on one of the beds, keeping her foot elevated, which seemed to have helped her ankle.\n

\nAs time had passed, even with just the two of them in the base, the tension had grown, and eventually Dortmun had found himself sitting with the girl in the main workshop of the base, waiting for the others to return with news of a great victory.\n

\nThe wait stretched on.\n

\nDortmun looked at the clock he'd insisted be put on the wall. He was sure it helped keep people productive. Now it was taunting as minutes ticked by and no-one returned.\n

\nHis mouth started to feel dry.\n

\nHe worked out how long it would have taken them to get to the ship, calculated how long it would take to attack and then scatter to make their way back. He ran the calculation again. It made no difference.\n

\nThey should have been back by now.\n

\nMaybe they were keeping their heads low to avoid the Daleks? That would make sense. The Daleks in command were bound to put every Dalek and Roboman on patrol. \n

\nBut the Daleks and Robomen should all be dead, shouldn't they? His bombs would have done that.\n

\nAnother hour ticked around.\n

\nNobody came back. \n

\nAnother hour.\n

\nStill nobody.\n

\nCould something have gone wrong? Not with his plan, naturally. That had been perfect. Perhaps they were delayed in getting to the saucer? That was definitely possible. The books on tactics he had read all said that a great general needed to be flexible. His plan was flexible enough. They just needed to get close enough to use the bombs.\n

\nAnother half hour.\n

\nStill nobody came.\n

\nThe clock ticked around.\n

\nAnother quarter of an hour.\n

\nThe girl looked like she was going to say something. Dortmun glared at her and she stayed quiet. He knew she was nervous but there was no need to say anything. Not yet.\n

\nAnother ten minutes.\n

\nThe light flashed and the alarm buzzed. Dortmun raised his machine gun as the door opened. It would be either Daleks or all of his rebels come to celebrate their great victory.\n

\nOne man staggered in, quickly closing the door behind him. Wyler was limping more than usual. He was dirty, dishevelled and angry. Susan hurried towards him with a bottle of water.\n

\n‘No, I’m all right,’ the Scot said angrily, brushing Susan aside. He made straight towards Dortmun, but seemed to force himself to stop. He took the water from Susan and drank heavily before tipping some over his head. He rubbed it away from his face roughly. He looked around the near empty room. ‘I’m the only one, eh?’ He didn’t sound surprised. \n

\n‘Yes, you’re the first,’ Dortmun said, carefully putting emphasis on his last word.\n

\nWyler ran a towel over his face and threw it aside. ‘Or the last.’ He staggered to a bench and slumped into a chair.\n

\n‘Well?’ Dortmun demanded. He had to know. ‘What happened?’\n

\n‘It was a failure,’ Wyler said. He sounded angry and bewildered. ‘We managed to get one or two of the prisoners away but...’\n

\nMention of the prisoners spurred the girl to speak. ‘What about my grandfather?’ she asked.\n

\nWyler scowled at being interrupted but he still answered. ‘An old-ish man? Thin faced?’\n

\nThe girl nodded eagerly. ‘Yes.’\n

\n‘He was with David.’ Wyler told Susan. ‘I think they got away before the Daleks regrouped.’ He turned angrily back to Dortmun. ‘Your bombs were no good. We didn’t have a chance.’\n

\n‘No,’ Dortmun wouldn’t hear that. It couldn’t have been his bombs. He had spent months working on them. Years. He had read every book he could find, used every bit of scientific knowledge he had ever heard or read to make those bombs perfect. If something had gone wrong, it couldn’t have been the fault of his bombs. Perhaps the sensor pins hadn’t been fitted properly. He knew he should have done it all himself. He couldn’t trust anyone. ‘We must carry on resisting,’ he said firmly.\n

\n‘But you can’t fight metal with flesh and blood,’ Wyler roared.\n

\nAn alarm from the old radio set interrupted Wyler. Moments later a Dalek's voice grated out of the old speaker. 'An attack on the Dalek spaceship has been defeated.'\n

\nThe Dalek continued speaking but Dortmun had stopped listening. He knew it would only be threats of reprisals for the failed attack.\n

\nWyler knew it too. As the Dalek issued threats to flatten London, the Scot said, 'We'll have to get away from here.'\n

\nDortmun had been thinking along similar lines. 'You're right. We'll make our way to the outskirts of London. We'll pick up a van there. There's plenty of transport lying about.' His mind was already racing on how they could reorganise and begin the next stage of the fightback. 'Then we'll hide out in the country and regroup.'\n

\n'What about my grandfather and Louise?' The girl's mind was still on her family rather than on the bigger picture of resisting the Daleks.\n

\nDortmun was spared from trying to hide his disinterest in anything so minor by Wyler. 'If they're with David they'll come back here,' the big Scot said. 'Leave a message.'\n

\nThe Dalek was still screaming threats and Dortmun switched the radio off. That, at least, showed Wyler who was in charge. He would decide whether they listened to the Daleks or not.\n

\n'Prepare some provisions for the journey, Wyler,' Dortmun said. The big man glared back but after a few seconds he nodded and moved off to the kitchen area. Looking across, Dortmun saw that the girl – Susan, yes that was her name – had found a piece of chalk and had started writing a message on the back of the door into the base. It was a smart enough place to choose, he thought. The old man was bound to see it at some point, even if only when going back to leave.\n

\nThe girl continued writing her message.\n

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\nSeveral miles away a Dalek patrol consisting of two Daleks glided along a short street, passing the remains of an old factory. They passed within a few feet of a manhole cover which was slightly out of place. There was nothing unusual in that. The city had been so brutally bombarded that a slightly displaced manhole cover was commonplace. However, as the Daleks moved away, the cover moved more until there was enough space for first David Campbell and then Dr Who to emerge into the early morning daylight.\n

\nThe two men had spent hours beneath the streets of London, trying to make headway through the sewers but the bombardment had caused several sewers to collapse making the men turn back regularly to try different routes. In the end they had become quite lost and had been forced to risk looking above ground for their bearings. Finally David had reached a point where he was comfortable with them going back on the surface properly. He knew this part of London and he knew plenty of good places to hide if necessary.\n

\n'Come on,' he told Dr Who, and together, the two men ran.\n

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\nIt was a drumming sound that finally brought Louise back to consciousness. There was a pounding in her head but beyond that pain she could hear a steady thudding. It took her a moment to realise that it was the co-ordinated marching of several pairs of booted feet. Robomen were marching past her hiding place. Looking around, Louise realised that shouldn't hide in that store room for long. She had been lucky not to be found by a Roboman restocking on equipment already.\n

\nLouise glanced at her watch. She had been unconscious for hours. She really had been very lucky not to be found already. She daredn't push that luck any further. The attack would be long over by now. She needed to find somewhere else to hide or to get off the ship completely. \n

\nThe corridor outside of the store room was quiet and Louise risked looking out. There was no sign of movement or any sound other than the spaceship's regular background hum of energy.\n

\nLouise followed the corridor. She stopped at a corner and peered round. It led to another store room. Further on, the corridor opened out into a larger, more open space. It had uncomfortable-looking benches and some kind of dispensing machine. Two of the walls were made of a bizarre shimmering corrugated metal. It wasn't ideal but it was abandoned and there were possible hiding places behind the machines and support beams around the walls. She slipped further into the room.\n

\nA hand clamped quickly over her mouth. Louise opened her mouth to bite hard but stopped as a familiar face slid round in front of her.\n

\n'It's all right. It's me. It's Tom.'\n

\n'Tom!' she exclaimed in relief.\n

\nHe had emerged from behind the corrugated metal wall which seemed flexible enough to move like material.\n

\n'Don't talk,' he whispered, grabbing Louise's hand and leading her across to the other oddly corrugated wall. 'There's a marvellous place to hide across here.'\n

\nThe dispensing machines were placed against this wall and would throw the area behind the corrugated material into greater shade. How did Tom know about it? She have to ask later. She would also ask why he was dressed like one of those terrible Robomen. \n

\nThey had almost made it to hiding when one of the machines by Louise's side started bleeping loudly and began spitting out plastic plates covered with pills. Looking down she saw that the wide sleeve of her tweed jacket had caught a control. After a few frantic attempts, between them she and Tom managed to turn the dispensing machine off. Tom scooped up the plastic plates and as many pills as he could and took them to a covered shutter in the wall.\n

\n'Come here,' he said urgently. 'Wave your hand across the sensor.'\n

\nLouise did as she was told and the shutter slid open. Immediately the plates were sucked from Tom's hands as if by a huge vacuum cleaner. The shutter slid shut automatically.\n

\nTom was already on the move, leading Louise into his hiding place, an unused storage space behind the corrugated wall and the machines. 'What are you doing here?' he finally asked with a

grin she found rather appealing.\n

\n'I was trapped in the raid,' Louise answered.\n

\nTom nodded. 'So was I.' He started unzipping his Roboman uniform. 'I saw the Doctor escape though.'\n

\nDespite her own danger, Louise felt a huge wave of relief that her uncle had been rescued.

'Oh, he's all right, then?'\n

\n'I think so, yes,' Tom nodded. He pulled at the shoulder of the black Roboman one-piece. 'Help get me out of this thing, would you, please?'\n

\n'Of course.' Louise helped work the tight material over Tom's shoulder. If her uncle was free then she was confident that they stood a real chance of winning. He was the most resourceful man she had ever known. He had defeated the Daleks before. She was sure he could do it again. And if she had to spend time with someone waiting for her uncle to come up with a plan, she was rather glad it was someone as brave and kind as Tom Campbell.\n

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\nA few miles away, in the Underground Station base of the rebels, two more Robomen uniforms were being discarded.\n

\nDavid Campbell and Dr Who had returned to the base to find it abandoned and in darkness. The generator, normally religiously tended and kept operating, had been left to run down, leaving the base with only the most meagre of battery power, meaning that only a few of the smaller lights now offered any illumination. In the gloom, Dr Who and David worked to get rid of the loathed Roboman uniforms.\n

\n'Dortmun and the others must have decided to move on,' David said. 'They'd never let the place run down this way otherwise.'\n

\n'Yes,' Dr Who agreed breezily, 'but where have they gone?'\n

\nIt could have been any one of a dozen places, David thought. They might have made for the coast and tried for Europe. They might have made for Scotland. The truth was that there was no way of knowing what Dortmun would have done after his bombs had failed. 'I don't know,' he admitted.\n

\nDr Who had stepped out of his uniform and was straightening his regular clothes. They were remarkably clean and well-tended. He obviously hadn't been in the city long, David thought.

'Susan was here you say?' Dr Who asked. 'And Louise?'\n

\nDavid finally pulled the last of his own uniform away. 'Yes.'\n

\n'You should have made them stay,' the old man said firmly.\n

\n'They wouldn't listen,' David explained. He had tried to persuade Louise not to go on the attack.\n

\n'You should have made them listen,' Dr Who said sharply.\n

\n'All right,' David glared back at the old man. 'Maybe I should but I didn't.'\n

\nFor a moment it looked as if they might descend into a full argument but Dr Who turned away,

his attention distracted by set of Dortmund's notepads which sat on a worktop. He picked one up and flicked through it. 'This may give us some idea of where they've gone.' His bony finger picked out a section of a map that had been ringed. 'This?' he asked David.

David recognised the map immediately. He had spent long hours discussing it with Dortmund and Wyler. 'Yes, that's the big mine area,' he said. 'Dortmund must have ringed it. He said he studied geology. He had some pretty wild ideas about what the Daleks were up to in that mine.'

Dr Who was quickly skimming through the notebooks, reading with extraordinary speed. 'Mmm... there's nothing wild about these notes. Rather a lot of well-informed guess-work, I should say.' The old man reached into his inside pocket and produced a pair of gloves which he began to pull on.

David didn't understand why this crazy old Doctor was getting ready to go outside. 'Aren't we going to stay here?' he asked. 'It'll be safe enough.'

Dr Who straightened up, put Dortmund's notebooks into a satchel and slung it over his shoulder. 'I don't know about you, young man,' he said imperiously, 'but I am going to that mine in Bedfordshire.'

David just stared at him for a moment. Why would anyone want to go to that place? It had a reputation as being worse than Hell itself. But there was something about the old man, something about the way he talked... something about the way he understood Daleks when he talked about them, the way he talked about science and using it against the Daleks... No, this old Doctor was going to Bedfordshire to pick a fight with the Daleks, and David Campbell was never going to walk away from a fight with those metal monsters. He crossed to a workbench and helped himself to the most powerful rifle he saw and as much ammunition as he could carry.

Dr Who watched his actions with an approving eye. 'You don't have to come, you know,' the old man said with a slight twinkle in his eye.

David shrugged and gave a wry smile. 'I always did prefer the country.'

A second button to operate the sliding door was operated on a wall. David pressed that rather than spend time searching in the murk for the control by the door. With a painful slowness, the door reluctantly slid open. The lights flickered and died. The door had used the last of the life in the batteries.

David led the way out with Dr Who following a few steps behind. 'Most unlike Susan not to leave me a message,' the old fellow tutted to himself. 'Most unlike her.'

Outside, from habit, David pressed the hidden control to close the door. He wasn't surprised that it didn't move. The power was gone. He led Dr Who away, down towards the Underground's network of tunnels which would lead them out to the edge of the great city.

A few moments later, the door's control box, which had been programmed to automatically close after thirty seconds, sent the instruction to close the door. From somewhere, the system dredged enough power to close the door one last time and painfully slowly the door slid into

place.\n

\nSusan's message to Dr Who sat in the dark, unread.\n

\n \n

\nGRANDFATHER\n

\nWe are heading for WATFORD.\n

\nWill wait for you there.\n

\nSusan\n

CHAPTER SEVEN

London Abandoned

As they finally emerged from an Underground station into the open air several miles away from the base, David and Dr Who both looked back. If anything, the devastation to the great city looked even worse from this distance.

'There.' Dr Who's finger pointed.

The recognisable shape of the Dalek spaceship lifted into the sky and began to skim across the city, slowly gaining altitude.

'I wonder if the Constable's up there,' Dr Who said softly. 'And my dear Louise.'

On board the Dalek ship, Tom Campbell and Louise had heard the engine rise in intensity and then they had felt the ship lift off. They had settled down, sitting close together and talking quietly.

Tom shifted slightly to get some life back into his legs. They were getting numb from sitting still on such a hard floor for so long. 'Sorry,' he said as his leg nudged Louise.

She wasn't bothered and leaned closer. 'I wonder where they're taking us.'

'I don't know,' Tom admitted. 'We might be stuck in here for days.' Despite the pleasant company, he didn't like that thought much. If they were to be stuck in the spaceship for that long surely it would mean that the ship was going into space? Or was he letting his imagination run away with him?

Louise didn't seem to like the idea of being cooped up in the ship for that long either. 'When we do land,' she said, 'I wonder if we could get out using that disposal chute?'

Tom hadn't considered that notion. 'I don't know,' he admitted, rubbing his chin. 'It's got to be worth a try, though.'

Louise smiled. Tom followed suit. They had some kind of plan. At least that was something.

Far below, in the heart of London, Wyler, Dortmun and Susan looked up at the spaceship as it flew overhead. They were inside a private garage which contained a few vehicles of varying styles and vintages. They watched the spaceship through the solar glass of the garage's roof.

'More prisoners,' Susan said sourly.

Getting out of the base had revitalised Dortmun. He was active again. Even simply fleeing London was an act of defiance and the first phase of the next step in fighting the Daleks. 'At least we know your grandfather isn't one of them,' he said. Susan had said her grandfather was

a scientist. If he was as good as she claimed, Dortmun could probably use him as an assistant.

Wyler climbed into the driver's seat of a retro van. It was entirely electrically powered and had been connected to the roof which was made exclusively of a transparent substance containing solar panels. It had been dubbed "solar glass" and the name had stuck even though there was no glass in it. Having been connected to the solar glass for however long it had been since anyone had driven it last, the van had a full charge which meant that it could drive for a month non-stop before another charge would be needed, and Dortmun planned to be well set-up in a new bolt-hole in a fraction of that time.

'Come on,' Wyler said, 'let's get going.'

'Right, Susan,' Dortmun said confidently, 'in you get. I'll open the doors.'

'No,' Wyler protested but Dortmun waved the big Scot's concerns aside. 'Go on, I can manage.' He had looked at the doors earlier and found the locks well within his reach, even from his wheelchair. It was important that he should be active and that people should see that he was still active. Leaders, important people like him, overcame these difficulties. Opening the doors would be easy enough. The van had a lift at the back, which he could operate himself to get into the back. Yes, he had it all under control.

Dortmun pushed himself towards the garage's doors. Releasing the lock, he pushed the doors open and peered out again. There was still no sign of movement. He waved for Wyler to bring the van out. He heard the engine grow louder as the Scot slipped the van into gear.

Movement.

Something moved to his left, in the alley to the side of the pub, The Watford Road Arms. He caught the motion in the corner of his eye.

A Dalek.

Dortmun looked at the satchel he had slung over his shoulder. The last of his bombs... his Dortmun Bombs. The alley the Dalek was in was narrow. That would concentrate the blast from the bombs. If he could prove that his bombs worked, Wyler would have no choice other than to believe in him, and Wyler would tell others. All he had to do was kill this Dalek.

Dortmun wheeled himself towards the alley.

'What's he doing?' Wyler leaned forward in his seat, a frown creasing his already lined face. 'Where's he going?'

The van eased out of the garage into the street. Almost immediately, Wyler saw both Dortmun and the Dalek and he understood what the scientist was planning.

So did Susan. 'He's going to try to use his bombs.'

'He's an idiot.' Wyler pulled the van to a halt and slipped out. His leg ached but he ignored the pain. 'Dortmun!' he hissed. 'Dortmun, come back.'

Dortmun ignored him. Wyler could see the fanatical zeal in the scientist's eyes as he pulled his

bombs from a satchel and started throwing them at the approaching Dalek.\n

\nThe Dalek opened fire, missing Dortmun by a few inches.\n

\n'Don't be a fool!' Wyler yelled. 'Dortmun!\n

\nTwo more Daleks had appeared at the far end of the alley. Wyler stared in horror as Dortmun pushed himself closer, still throwing bombs. They had no effect on the Daleks. In fury, Dortmun threw the entire satchel. \n

\nWyler watched in dismay as the satchel missed the Daleks and landed by the wall of the pub.\n

\nAll three Daleks had closed on Dortmun. As one, they screamed, 'Exterminate!'\n

\nThey blasted Dortmun into oblivion.\n

\nAs the energy from Dalek's weapon tore through his body, Eric Peters realised that Dortmun was a fake. \n

\nHe was Eric Peters and he was dying a death billions of others had already experienced.\n

\nThere was nothing special about Eric Peters. He was just another victim of the Daleks.\n

\n \n

\nA moment after the Daleks opened fire on Dortmun, Wyler heard the bombs explode. He was already hurrying to get back into the van but Susan pointed towards the alley.\n

\n'The wall,' she said.\n

\nThe pub's wall cracked loudly. An instant later three storeys of ancient London pub collapsed noisily, raining bricks and masonry on the Daleks. Dortmun had obviously realised that his bombs may not have affected the Daleks directly but he had used them to find a way to get a victory of sorts.\n

\nWyler had never much liked Dortmun. He'd been too full of his own importance, too interested in everyone knowing that he was in charge. He had to give the man his due, though. He had taken out those Daleks and given the girl and himself a chance to escape.\n

\n'Look!' Susan was staring straight ahead.\n

\nAttracted by the explosion or maybe altered by some kind of alarm inside the Daleks themselves, more Daleks had begun to emerge from the side streets. There were four, no six... a dozen of them. \n

\nThere was no way to run or hide from so many Daleks. He was nursing an injured leg and the girl wasn't fully recovered yet either. The Daleks wouldn't care that she was just a kid. They'd exterminate her all the same. They'd exterminated tens of millions of kids already. Innocent kids who had never threatened them or harmed them.\n

\nKids like...\n

\nWyler put that memory away. That was for another time. \n

\nThey only had one option. Pushing the engine to its maximum, Wyler released the brake and sped straight for the Daleks. The van accelerated smoothly and he pushed the accelerator to its maximum. The Daleks turned towards them. He clipped one, knocking its pincer arm off.

Another opened fire. It was too slow. The van slammed into it, rupturing the Dalek's casing and forcing it into one of its comrades. Both Daleks exploded.\n

\nAll of the Daleks instinctively opened fire. Wyler weaved the van, avoiding the blasts of the weapons as best as he could. The outside of the van was hot from the energy but it stood firm as he crashed through Dalek after Dalek. His mirrors filled with the flashes of explosion after explosion as the damaged Daleks erupted violently.\n

\nHe crashed through one final Dalek before he saw the end of the street. 'Hold on,' he said to Susan, and he swung the van into the tight corner. It turned remarkably well and he accelerated again. As the van pulled away, making for a road leading out into the country, Wyler heard the screeching of a Dalek fading into the distance.\n

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\nWhat Wyler didn't hear were the words the Dalek said as it reported to its leaders aboard the saucer.\n

\n'Patrol Nine to Spaceship... intercept escaping humans.'\n

\nHigh overhead, the Dalek's message was received by the red Dalek who had commanded so many operations aboard the ship. \n

\n'Intercept escaping humans travelling in Area Nine,' the voice of the Dalek on the ground echoed through the Dalek control room.\n

\n'Search for them,' the red Dalek instructed a subordinate. \n

\nThe ship's array of sensors and detectors immediately switched to the area mentioned, searching for energy output, noise, any kind of magnetic disturbance and countless other means of detection. Ultimately the human vehicle was acquired visually as it sped along a small road. The humans were trying to use the canopy of trees as cover but nothing could evade superior Dalek technology. \n

\n'We have located the rebel machine,' the red Dalek said in satisfaction. \n

\nA deeper, harsher Dalek voice spoke and a gold Dalek emerged from its sanctuary just off the control room. 'Prepare to annihilate,' it said.\n

\nThe red Dalek took control of the weapons. When the Gold Dalek issued an order, the next highest ranking Dalek present should carry it out. The Gold Dalek was supreme among the Daleks on Earth. Its word was law. The red Dalek focused the sensor equipment and locked the targeting detectors on the human vehicle, easily keeping a lock on it as it sped through what had once been a human farm dwelling and scattered a group of an almost flightless avian species, before resuming its path under the cover of trees. \n

\nIt was too late for them. The Daleks had located their vehicle and locked on to it. \n

\nNothing ever escaped from the Daleks.\n

\nThe red Dalek gave the instruction for the ship to begin its attack run.\n

\n \n

\nSusan was squirming in her seat, trying to look out of the window at something. That worried

Wyler immediately.\n

\n'What is it?' he demanded.\n

\n'There's a flying saucer overhead,' Susan said. She sounded every bit as worried as Wyler felt. 'It's coming closer.'\n

\nWyler craned his neck to look up through the trees. The girl was right. The Dalek ship was trailing their course and dipping closer to the ground. That could only mean one thing. They were going to attack.\n

\nHe swung the van into a turn. The wheels skidded on the muddy road but somehow he kept it moving forward. There was only one more turn ahead then they would lose their tree cover for a mile or so.\n

\n'Get ready to jump,' he told Susan.\n

\nThe girl nodded. Reaching ahead she strained and picked up a tool box from the foot-well. 'Use this to jam the accelerator.'\n

\nWyler took the tool box and put it on the floor by his feet. 'I'll slow at the turn so you can jump out. I'll jump as soon as I accelerate and jam this in place.'\n

\n'All right,' Susan said, opening the door.\n

\nWyler slowed as the bend approached. 'Jump.' The girl was gone before the word was complete. Pushing the accelerator to the floor, Wyler kicked the toolbox onto the accelerator pedal and threw himself out of the van into a thick patch of overgrown foliage. He landed hard and everything ached from the impact but nothing had broken. He started struggling to his feet and found Susan by his side, helping him up. \n

\n'Come on,' she said. 'The bushes are much thicker back here.'\n

\nDespite his aches and the pain in every step, Wyler let the girl lead him to the cover of thick undergrowth that had grown out of control since the Daleks invaded.\n

\nThey heard the whine of the Dalek saucer approaching. The van bumped and jostled unsteadily along the road, almost as if it was weaving to avoid being fired on.\n

\nThe sound of a vast energy weapon being fired drew their eyes up to the Dalek ship. A ball of energy was hurtling from the saucer towards the van. It hit the fleeing vehicle a direct hit and the van was torn apart by a huge explosion as the fuel cells detonated. There was little left but a few metal shards and a crater full of fire.\n

\nEven at their distance and protected by the foliage, Wyler and Susan both turned away from the tremendous blast of heat.\n

\nWhen they looked up, the Dalek ship was climbing and accelerating away from the remains of their transport.\n

\n'Are you all right?' Wyler asked. The girl nodded but looked at the van with forlorn eyes. 'Do you still think this grandfather of yours will follow you to Watford?' he asked.\n

\nThe girl looked unsure. 'If he reads the message I left.' She was evidently having doubts about whether her grandfather would have made it to the Underground shelter.\n

\n'It's a long way on foot,' Wyler warned her.\n

\n'We'll make it,' Susan said wearily, pushing herself up onto her feet.\n

\nWyler sighed. He wasn't sure about Watford. He wasn't sure about anything anymore. 'Well, we'd better get started then,' he said gruffly.\n

\nSusan held out a hand to help him rise. It was so like the way Kirstie had always offered to help him to stand when she teased him that he was an old man. The memory was a painful mixture of warmth and a horrific emptiness. He took Susan's hand and heaved himself up to his feet. He gave her hand a squeeze before releasing it.\n

\nJust for a second he'd had Kirstie back again.\n

\nNo, the past was gone. All they had was the present and that meant walking. Best not to think of anything else.\n

\n \n

\nDr Who looked intently at the map he had appropriated at the Underground station. He had planned a route to the Bedfordshire mine which would take them through Watford. David had mentioned a resistance network was very active there but as they approached the edge of the town they saw evidence of enormous Dalek activity. Smoke rose in awful spirals from hundreds of locations. The few people they had met had been clear. The Daleks had wiped out opposition in Watford.\n

\n'You're right. There's nothing else for it,' Dr Who said, 'we shall have to bypass Watford. The place is full of Daleks.' His pencil marked a circuitous route which avoided Watford and took them by Hemel Hempstead and then Dunstable. Both were large enough to provide some kind of supplies for their journey to Bedfordshire. They might even find some transportation they could use. 'We must find out what they're up to,' he said softly. 'We must.'\n

\n \n

\nTom and Louise had been trapped in their hiding place for far longer than either could have dreamed in their worst nightmare. The ship had touched down a few times but on each occasion it had only stayed on the ground for barely an hour and the room beyond their hiding place had been filled with Robomen each time. \n

\nThey had taken turns in sleeping for a few hours while the other kept watch and when they were both awake, they had just talked. Tom's stories of youthful misadventures while he was growing up had seemed tame and dull next to Louise's travels through space and time with Dr Who – Tom felt much more at ease calling him the Doctor – as well as with Susan, her cousin Barbara, Barbara's fiancé Ian and occasionally with another cousin, Jim and his girlfriend, Vanessa, who was from 1912. The odd thing was that she was sure Jim hadn't met Vanessa yet. 'Time travel occasionally throws things like that at us,' she smiled.\n

\nTom really did like that smile. 'Tell me about the places you've been.'\n

\nAnd she did. Louise told him of alien worlds, of meeting people who looked nothing like humans but who met them with warmth, she talked of a world where the sea was acid, a world

of enormous intelligent insects, of a world in which there had been giants a hundred feet tall. She talked of visits to the past and to the future, and of the few interesting historical figures she had met. She interrupted her stories suddenly. 'Why are you a policeman?'\n\n'I'm not,' Tom answered, surprised by the change of subject, 'at least not a real one. Not yet.'\n\n'Ah, yes,' she nodded. 'You're a Special Constable.'\n\n'But I will be a full-time policeman,' he said with certainty. 'I'll be a proper copper, just like my old man was.'\n\n'Your father was in the police, too?'\n\n'Yeah,' Tom confirmed. 'Detective Sergeant Arthur Campbell.'\n\n'There's something in your voice when you say "was" about him,' Louise said gently. 'What happened?'\n\nTom sniffed and shifted uncomfortably. He didn't talk about what had happened to his dad much. That meant he hadn't spoken much about the old boy much over the last ten years. He just knew what had happened had shaped his own plans. \n\n'Dad was killed on the job,' Tom said finally. 'Run over by a mob robbing a bank. They got caught a few streets away but it was too late for Dad. That's why I want to be a copper.' He shrugged. 'My old Mum went potty when I told her. She really doesn't want me to do it.'\n\n'You understand why.'\n\n'I do,' Tom agreed. He had always been close to his mother. 'That's why I said I'd do a couple of years as a Special to prove to her that I knew what I was doing. After that, I'll join properly.'\n\n'Is she proud of you?'\n\nTom looked at the floor self-consciously. 'I don't know. I hope so.'\n\nLouise gave his hand a squeeze. 'I'm sure she is.'\n\n'I hope so,' Tom mumbled, 'she's the only family I've got around here... well, at home, now.'\n\n'There's something to be said for a family,' Louise agreed.\n\nTom had to agree with that. 'Tell me more about your family,' he said.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Dalek Mine

Dr Who's trip to Bedfordshire had taken a good deal less time than he or David had anticipated. They had found an abandoned farm a few miles after deciding to bypass Watford. Chickens and ducks were roaming free in the yard and Dr Who had quickly tracked down a few eggs, which he had cooked for David and himself. It was the first time David had tasted a fresh egg in longer than he could remember.

In a shed by the farmhouse they had found an electric motorcycle which was still half-charged. The motorcycle had allowed them to make good time towards Bedfordshire, sticking to quiet side roads or cutting across country. David had always liked motorbikes but he was surprised to find the old man was also enjoying the trip on the motorbike enormously. They had both been terribly disappointed when the bike had whined and the engine had died as the battery finally failed, leaving them to continue on foot.

Dr Who carefully marked their position on the map.

'How far have we got to go now?' David asked.

Dr Who put the map back into his satchel and looked disapprovingly at the slow moving stream ahead. 'About three miles.'

'Halt!' A lifeless voice made them both spin.

David fired on instinct. He knew the dull tone as a Roboman's voice. There were two of them just up a rise at the side of the stream. David's first shot was fired as he dropped to the ground, the second an instant after he landed. Both hit their mark, sending the Robomen toppling into the stream.

Dr Who extended a hand to help David to his feet. 'As I was saying,' the old man said, 'about three miles.'

Tom had become so used to the Dalek spaceship landing and taking off again soon after that when the ship bumped back to ground he barely stirred as he dozed.

Louise was more excited. She shook Tom's leg. 'Everything's still,' she said. Her hand was on the metal floor.

Tom did the same. He could feel a change in the slight vibration that was a constant part of the ship. It was dying away.

Louise made the leap before Tom did. 'The saucer's landed.'

Tom felt the vibration continue to fade beneath his hand. 'I think you're right.' He sprang to her feet and helped Louise up. 'Come on.'

\nThey cautiously made their way out of hiding into the Robomen's resting room. Tom looked around. Something was different. There was no sign of any Robomen. \n

\nSomething moved. 'Back,' he hissed, flattening himself against a wall. He saw Louise duck behind a food dispenser. A moment later a Dalek glided past the open doorway. He paused, waiting to be certain that the Dalek was gone, before moving back into the room. Louise was already at the disposal chute they had found earlier. The suction whipped at her hair.\n

\n'I don't think we can get out this way,' Tom said uncertainly. They really had no way of knowing where the chute led.\n

\nLouise was already climbing up to get into the chute. 'Well, we can't stay in the saucer.'\n

\nThat was also true and there was no way they could hide indefinitely. At least this way they'd actually be doing something. 'All right,' he said reluctantly, gently easing Louise back down. 'I know it's 1966 and everything's changing but I'll go first, if you don't mind.'\n

\nLouise quickly moved aside. 'Chivalrous?' Her eyes were twinkling. Even in a situation as serious as this she was teasing him.\n

\nTom climbed up quickly and slipped his feet into the chute. The wind dragged at him. 'Not really. I'm just scared of being left here on my own.'\n

\nLouise's laugh was the last thing Tom heard as he released his grip on the side of the chute. The suction dragged him downwards. The chute was only just wide enough for Tom to pass through. He saw several smaller opening at the side of the chute as he whizzed past. Pills were sucked into one of these vents, plates into another and the... the chute disappeared and he was in the open air. He landed hard on the ground before he fully realised that he was outside the ship. He caught his breath and looked up, just inside to see a mass of tweed hurtling towards him. He rolled aside quickly and Louise landed by his side, showing a good deal more grace than he had mustered.\n

\n'You all right?' he asked.\n

\nLouise flipped her hair out of her face. 'Yes.'\n

\nThey hurried away from the saucer. It appeared to have landed on a flattened rise overlooking the opening to a mine. Thankfully, the ramp had yet to come down. They moved carefully, slipping from one piece of cover to another until they had reached a mound of earth which seemed to be removed from any activity that was currently happening and had a good bit of cover from a stack of equipment. From behind that mound they looked down at the mine workings.\n

\nDaleks and Robomen moved among the exhausted workers. The Daleks screamed threats and the Robomen whipped the fatigued slaves, demanding that they work harder. The slaves, men and women of all ages, shambled with broken bodies and broken spirits, desperately trying to avoid the jolt of another blow from a Roboman's electrically charged whip. The miners were as lifeless as their Robomen overseers. \n

\nTom and Louise took in the horrific sight below for a long minute before Louise tried to speak.

'Do you think...?'\n

\nTom interrupted, beckoning her to follow him. 'Come on. Not here.'\n

\nThey slipped away, using bushes and stacks of equipment as cover to reach the furthest edge of the mine's outer compound, where stacks of metal mingled incongruously with old fashioned wooden sheds. A Roboman moved ahead of them and they ducked behind a stack of metal girders, watching the Roboman as he moved towards two exhausted men who were trying to lift some kind of drill bit under the malevolent gaze of a Dalek. \n

\n'Move!' the Roboman whipped one of the men. 'Work faster!'\n

\nTom turned away. He wanted to attack the Roboman and rip that whip from his hand but he knew that the Dalek would exterminate all of them in an instant if he tried. The feeling of helplessness made him feel physically ill.\n

\n'Right...' he began.\n

\n'Stay where you are.' A ragged, weary-looking man of around fifty stood on a small crate peering into a larger opened crate of supplies. He looked at them with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion. 'Who are you?'\n

\n'Well, I...' Tom stammered, desperately trying to think of a convincing answer. He looked to Louise for help but she was as stumped as he was.\n

\nThe man dropped to the ground and moved across to Tom and Louise. 'Why aren't you with your work detail?' They didn't answer and the man nodded his understanding. He looked at them with the first hint of humanity or compassion they had seen on anyone in the mine. 'You've just arrived, haven't you?'\n

\n'Yes,' Louise admitted.\n

\n'I thought your clothes looked too clean,' the man said thoughtfully, quickly looking around the mine. 'Have you just escaped out of the spaceship that just landed?'\n

\nThe guilty expression that passed between Tom and Louise was enough of an answer.\n

\nThe ragged man shook his head sadly. 'You stupid fools. You haven't a chance.' He stopped abruptly, stiffening with fear as something behind Tom caught his eye. \n

\nTom spun to see a Roboman approaching. It was the one who had been whipping the workers a few moments earlier.\n

\n'Follow me,' the ragged man hissed urgently. 'I'll do the talking.' He led them to the crate he had opened and quickly passed an armful of shovels to Louise and then another to Tom.\n

\nThe Roboman stared impassively at Tom and Louise before turning to the ragged man. 'What are these two doing here?'\n

\nThe ragged man pulled more shovels from the crate. 'I took them out of a work detail to help me collect some tools,' he said casually.\n

\n'You had no right to interfere in their assigned work,' the Roboman said dully, 'and they have no identification...'\n

\nThe Roboman's knees buckled as Tom brought the solid wooden handle of a pick-axe down

on the back of the Roboman's neck. The Dalek puppet fell face down in the muddy ground.\n

The ragged man looked at Tom aghast. 'What do you think you're doing, you crazy idiot?' He looked around desperately. 'The Daleks will miss him. We've got to get rid of him.'\n

Tom understood the man's fear but there hadn't been a choice and the Roboman had already been dead in every real sense anyway. Hadn't he? Think about that later, he told himself. Just do what needs done first. He nodded towards a heavy piece of tarpaulin-like sheeting covering large supply boxes. 'Stick him under that tarpaulin.'\n

Louise scurried to the tarpaulin and lifted it while between them, Tom and the mine worker man-handled the Roboman towards the cover. \n

'That's it,' Tom said, 'roll him in.'\n

A final push put the Roboman's body flush against the boxes and Louise dropped the tarpaulin. It flopped into place, hiding the body and giving no hint of what was hidden there.\n

Tom turned desperately to this man in rags who was now their only chance of avoiding the wrath of the Daleks. 'Is there anywhere we can hide?' he asked. The man shifted uncomfortably, clearly reluctant to involve himself further. Tom refused to be put off. 'Come on,' he pressed. 'Show us where we can hide.'\n

The ragged man finally gave way. 'All right, he said grudgingly, pointing at a large wooden shed thirty yards away on the edge of the collections of buildings. 'That tool shed over there. It's hardly ever used. It's your only chance. I'll send you some food later.'\n

Tom grabbed Louise's hand and ran. They made it past stacks of mining equipment before Louise pushed Tom hard towards a tall wall of stacked wooden crates. He looked at her in confusion... but he trusted her. A moment later he heard the regimented sound of marching feet in the mud.\n

Robomen.\n

A pair of the Dalek puppets strode away on the far side of the crates. Tom and Louise carefully made their way around the crates, keeping the cover between themselves and the Robomen until the guards had disappeared from sight, and then they ran, disappearing into the midst of an array of unpacked mining equipment. It was all large enough to afford some cover. They kept moving and they kept low, using the machinery to hide their progress, darting through gaps only when they were sure they wouldn't be spotted. Finally they were within a few yards of the shed. Just one more short sprint and they would be safe.\n

'Dalek,' Louise hissed.\n

She was right. A Dalek glided towards the shed and stopped, its dome swivelling as it looked around.\n

Tom held his breath and gripped Louise's hand tighter. She didn't move. Neither did the Dalek. It stayed in place, constantly scanning the mine compound. Finally, after at least ten minutes it moved, passing the front of the shed and disappearing around the side.\n

Tom didn't wait. This might be their only chance. He ran, pulling Louise after him. They hurried

into the shed and eased the door closed behind them. A moment later the shadow of the Dalek passed one of the filthy, mud-covered windows as it returned to its position.\n

\nVery, very slowly, Tom Campbell exhaled in relief.\n

\n \n

\nBill Wyler was tired. They had been on the move since the Dalek ship had blown the van to pieces. His leg was aching. It was hurt worse than he wanted to admit. He was desperate to just sit and rest it for a while but he knew that just wasn't possible. They'd dodged a few Robomen patrols already, and while those poor zombies weren't seen nearly as often in this part of the country as they were in London, if he insisted that he and Susan stopped for any length of time, there was every possibility they'd be caught. So he kept going through the pain.\n

\nThe girl was showing no signs of fatigue. She was young, he thought. Kids were always full of energy at that age. \n

\nHis own had been. \n

\nSusan was... Where was she? The terrain was rough with fallen trees and wild overgrown shrubs taller than he was. He couldn't see the girl anywhere. It would be too easy for her to get lost in this. How could he have been stupid enough to let her get out of sight?\n

\nHe hobbled over a fallen tree and followed the clearest path. It past one of the few trees that were still standing and was as likely a path for her to have taken as any.\n

\n'Boo!' Susan leaped from hiding behind the tree.\n

\nWyler staggered backwards on his injured leg for a moment before recovering his balance. Far too many memories and emotions hit him at once. He reacted. 'Cut that out!' he snapped, shoving Susan forward.\n

\nHe shambled on, pushing his way through the vegetation. That had been one of Kirstie's favourite games. She had loved to hide from him or sneak up on him. It had started when she was very small and they had never grown out of it. It was their game. They had laughed about it so much. That was how he had always thought of his daughter... laughing. He didn't want to think...\n

\nHe felt the tears on his cheeks.\n

\nSusan caught his sleeve. 'I'm sorry.' She led him to a fallen log. He slumped onto it, stretching his leg out. \n

\n'It's all right,' he muttered.\n

\n'Why are you crying?' Susan asked. 'I didn't mean to scare you.'\n

\nHe shook his head. 'It's not that. I...' He couldn't find words. He didn't want to. He didn't want to relive what had happened. He didn't care about anyone, didn't have real friends. He didn't want to. He couldn't. If he cared, the memories would come back. But it was too late. He had already breached the dam. 'I was away when the Daleks first attacked. I owned a business. A good one. We built houses. Offices for businesses. We lived in Edinburgh but I was in Stirling. I tried to get home when the attack started.' He remembered it, the fire in the sky. The end of his

world. 'I saw the meteorite smash into the part of the city we lived in. There was nothing left. Just a crater. My wife, my daughter... my Kirstie... there was nothing left of them. They were everything. The Daleks took everything.' He didn't have any more words. Just the misery of memories he had suppressed for too long. Susan sat on the log beside him. She was quiet and patient, but she was there and she didn't judge him for his outburst.

Slowly, Wyler pulled himself together and wiped his tears away.

'We can't get to Watford that way,' he said finally, inclining his head off to one side. 'The Daleks are everywhere. We haven't found any food either.'

'Never mind,' Susan said. 'There's a cottage just ahead.'

A cottage? That could mean food and shelter. It could also mean danger. 'Where?'

Susan pointed. 'Just across the stream.'

'Nobody saw you, did they?' he demanded.

Susan shook her head confidently. 'No, but there's someone outside.'

Wyler thought for a moment. He had to balance what would be safest against getting some shelter and food for the girl. 'Let's take a look.'

The stream was more like a small river but the cottage was barely deserving of the name. It seemed to have once been some kind of boathouse that someone had converted to make fit for habitation... but only just. The wooden building looked like it was held together by spit, string and hope.

Susan had been right about it being inhabited though. An ancient woman was standing on what had once been a jetty leading out towards the stream. Now it played host to washing lines on which she struggled to pin wet clothes.

Wyler kept Susan out of view as he ran a quick reconnaissance of the house. There was a sort of weir across the stream. From there he saw another woman in the house. There was no way to tell her age but she shambled as much as the old woman on the jetty. He waited, giving ten minutes to observing the women before returning for Susan.

'Come on,' he said, leading Susan across the weir.

The old woman saw them approaching and watched them warily. She abandoned her washing but kept a good distance between herself and these newcomers.

Wyler and Susan were only five yards from the house when the second woman appeared, an old fashioned shotgun aimed squarely at the Scot's chest. 'Stop there.' She was half the age of the other woman, Wyler realised now, but the world the Daleks had inflicted on them had added years to her, making her old long before her time.

'We only want somewhere to rest,' Susan said with a calmness Wyler certainly didn't feel, looking at the shotgun. 'And a little food if you've got it.'

'Where are you from?' the old woman – the genuinely old woman – asked.

'London,' Susan answered. She pointed at Wyler's ankle. 'My friend's hurt his leg.'

The old woman remained impassive while the younger woman's aim with the shotgun never

wavered. 'Where are you heading?' the old one asked.\n

\nSusan's answer took Wyler by surprise. 'The Daleks' mine in Bedfordshire.'\n

\n'I thought you said Watford?' Wyler asked in bemusement.\n

\n'Grandfather won't stay there when he finds it's full of Daleks,' Susan explained. That made sense. 'I think he'll go on to the mine. He's bound to be curious.' She turned back to the two suspicious women. 'Can we come in?'\n

\nThe women looked at each other uncertainly. They clearly didn't trust anyone but themselves. Eventually, though, the older one nodded and the younger finally lowered the shotgun. \n

\nSusan led Wyler up the wooden steps onto the jetty. The pain became so extreme he had to lean on her for balance. When was the last time he had trusted anyone enough to lean on them?\n

\nThe old woman put a hand on Wyler's shoulder, stopping him. 'You were lucky to get this far,' she said. 'The patrols are everywhere.' She pushed him towards the door and he went into the shabby cottage. 'They never stop, day or night,' the old woman went on, following him inside.\n\nWyler nodded his understanding. 'Yes, I know. They nearly got us, more than once.' He looked around the cottage. It was clear that the women had lived there for quite some time. 'Why haven't the patrols taken you? They must know you're here.'\n

\n'Oh, they know all right,' the old woman agreed, 'but we can't harm them.' She sighed. 'We mend the clothes of the slave workers. We're more useful doing that than working in the mine.'\n

\nThe younger woman was by a stove, stirring at a blackened old pot and Wyler saw that Susan had spotted the remains of a home-baked loaf on the table. He could smell the soup in the pot. 'Well, how do you manage for food?' he asked.\n

\n'They give us some,' the old one answered. 'Not enough.' She wrapped her arms around her shoulders. 'We're hungry most of the time.'\n

\nWyler hated the idea of not eating – and he hated the idea of Susan going hungry more – but they couldn't take food from the mouths of these women. 'Okay, we'll just rest for a bit then push on.'\n

\n'Give them some of the soup,' the young one said, turning away from the stove. She scrutinised Wyler. 'You can't walk on that leg for a while.' She nodded, apparently her mind was made up. 'You can stay here till it's better if you like.'\n

\nSusan sighed. She sounded exhausted. 'Thank you.'\n

\nWyler nodded his agreement and they both sank onto a wooden bench the table. The old woman put the heavy black pot on the table and started ladling a vegetable broth into bowls. 'It's mostly potatoes but there's a bit of meat in there.'\n

\nThe younger one had pulled a ragged old shawl over her head and shoulders. She picked up a bundle of cloth. 'I have to deliver these clothes.'\n

\n'Mind how you go,' the old one said, handing the first bowl to Susan. \n

\n'Thank you.' The girl started eating hungrily.\n

\n'I'll be careful,' the young woman promised.\n

\nWylter took the second bowl and while the old woman ladled a helping for herself, he started to eat. It was thin, watery stuff but to him it was the best soup he could remember tasting.\n

\nThe old woman sat opposite her two guests and smiled as she started to eat.\n

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\nThe first thing David and Dr Who saw when they reached the edge of the woods overlooking the Daleks' mine was a chain of starving and exhausted workers being whipped as they tried to carry overly full baskets of equipment.\n

\nDavid seethed inside and he saw the old scientist's nose twitch and his chin rise. In the short time he had known this eccentric old fellow he had started to read his mannerisms. These particular twitches were a show of suppressed outrage.\n

\nBehind the brutalised workers was a small village of crates and huts and behind that was the mine itself. Beyond the mine, on a rise overlooking it all was the Daleks' spaceship.\n

\nDavid had seen enough. Their position was too exposed and if they were to sneak in to the mine – which, for some reason David couldn't fathom, Dr Who wanted to do – then they would have to find a place to do it unseen by the Robomen or their Dalek masters.\n

\nHe nudged the old fellow and indicated that they should move on. Dr Who nodded.\n

\nDavid led the old man back into the trees and used those as cover to begin working their way around the mine's perimeter. 'You know what'll happen if we into that mine, don't you?' he said. 'Chances are we'll never get out again.'\n

\nDr Who didn't disagree, but instead gave the explanation David had been waiting for. 'My boy, this mine is the centre of all the Dalek activity.' He fished Dortmund's notebooks from his satchel. 'Now your friend, Dortmund, has several theories, none of them conclusive but all of them based on one fundamental idea.'\n

\nDavid shrugged. 'They want something that's under the earth.'\n

\nDr Who looked disappointed that David had actually said something quite so blatantly obvious. 'Yes, but what? Minerals?' The old fellow grimaced. 'Most unlikely, don't you think? They could have found those on any of a thousand inhabited worlds or asteroids.'\n

\n'Well...' David thought, 'what about oil? That used to be an important resource, didn't it?'\n

\nDr Who nodded but looked unconvinced. 'It did, but given their level of technology, I doubt it. Besides, surely for that they would choose Texas or the Middle East? No.' He shook his head firmly. 'No, the Daleks have a far greater reason, a much more alien one. Strong enough to make them wage war on this planet. They are not enslaving Earth merely for conquest. What they are doing in this mine is the whole purpose of their invasion.' His face set and David saw something completely new in his companion. The doddery façade, which had previously slipped every now and then, was now completely gone. Dr Who's eyes shone with vitality and his body had straightened. He looked energised and younger. 'We must learn what that is if we are to find out where their weakness lies.'\n

\nIt was a good speech, a stirring one and David could tell that Dr Who believed it, but David had seen their best – their only – chance of defeating the Daleks destroyed when Dortmund's bombs had failed. 'The Daleks have no weakness,' he answered dully.\n

\n'Everybody has a weakness...'\n

\nDr Who's answer was cut short. A man in a heavy overcoat had stepped from the nearest tree, a vicious-looking serrated blade held at the old man's throat. David automatically lifted his rifle.\n

\n'Don't try it,' the newcomer said. There was a hint of Welsh in the voice which was rich and strong. 'Hold the rifle by the barrel and sling it over there.'\n

\nDavid would have bet that he could get a shot off before the knife could do any damage but it would bring every Roboman and Dalek from the mine down on them. Reluctantly he tossed the rifle aside. \n

\nKeeping his knife at Dr Who's throat the newcomer circled closer to the rifle. He moved quickly, scooping the rifle up and aiming it at David before the young man had been able to make half the distance between them. David settled for ensuring that Dr Who was uninjured. \n

\nThere was no physical damage but the old scientist was outraged. 'What is the meaning of this?'\n

\n'Shut up,' the Welshman said dismissively. 'What are you two jokers up to?'\n

\nDavid and Dr Who exchanged a look but remained silent.\n

\nThe Welshman didn't seem bothered. He continued, 'Sounded to me like you wanted to get into the mine.'\n

\n'We do,' Dr Who nodded.\n

\nTheir captor hummed thoughtfully. 'Most people want to get out of it.' He flicked his eyes up a slight rise in the woods. 'There's a sack up there,' he said to David. 'Get it.'\n

\nDavid looked at the rifle and then did as he was instructed. A bulging jute sack was behind a bush just up the hill. It clanked as he lifted it. The weight and sound could mean only one thing. Tinned food.\n

\n'It's full of food,' the Welshman confirmed. 'I'm taking it into the mine to sell.'\n

\n'Sell?' David's stomach turned. While the workers in the mine toiled and suffered, this sick parasite was profiting from their misery by selling them food. What kind of human did that to desperate people?\n

\n'There's only one way in and out of the mine,' their captor said. 'You can come with me if you really want to.' He patted the stock of David's rifle. 'This pays your fare.' He smiled a joyless, insincere smile. 'Singles of course. If you want returns that comes higher.'\n

\n'Why should we trust you?' David demanded. He wanted nothing more than to hit this vile excuse of a man and to keep hitting him.\n

\n'You won't get in without me,' the Welshman oozed in reply.\n

\n'And why are you willing to help us?' Dr Who asked simply.\n

\nThe answer was equally plain. 'It's my line of business.'\n

\nDr Who looked at David and nodded. There had been no doubt in David's mind what the old man would decide.\n

\n'We're ready when you are,' Dr Who said stiffly.\n

\n'Have you got a death wish or something?' the Welshman snapped. 'We stay here the night and slip into the mine when the early shift goes on in the morning.' He flicked the gun's muzzle into the woods. 'Now get moving, this way. We're too close to the mine for my liking at the moment.'\n

\nDavid and Dr Who did as their vile captor instructed and began walking into the woods.\n

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\nNight had fallen by the time the young woman returned to the cottage. Wyler saw her return with a bulging sack. She looked excited.\n

\nHe had been wakened by her return. Years of resisting the Daleks meant that he couldn't sleep deeply anymore. It had also made him suspicious of everyone. He and Susan were both stretched out on a bench and he kept his eyes almost closed, feigning sleep. \n

\nYes, there was something definitely suspicious about the way the young woman talked to her mother. The older woman looked back towards Wyler and Susan before looking inside the sack her daughter had brought back.\n

\n'Look,' Wyler heard the young one say, 'a tin of soup. Another tin. Cabbage. Some stew...'\n

\n'You've done well,' the mother said.\n

\nThe daughter grinned, showing broken, blackened teeth, and pulled fresh carrots from the sack.\n

\nWyler knew what had happened. He had been stupid to trust these women. \n

\n'I knew they'd give us more food if you told them.' The mother's words confirmed Wyler's fears.\n

\nHe shook Susan gently and placed his hand over her mouth. 'We need to go,' he whispered. 'They've sold us out.' The girl was immediately awake and on her feet. They moved silently towards the door. Wyler yanked it open, ready to run.\n

\nA Dalek waited outside, its weapon aimed at them. 'Forward,' it grated. 'Forward, or you will be exterminated.'\n

\nWyler turned his head and glared at the two women. They looked back, no hint of apology in their eyes.\n

\nHe took Susan's hand and they walked out, towards the Dalek and captivity. Wyler heard the young woman's voice behind them.\n

\n'Well,' she sniffed, 'they wanted to go to the mine anyway.'\n

\nHe heard them both laugh and laugh and laugh.\n

\nCHAPTER NINE\n

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\nAt the Earth's Core?\n

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\nLarge searchlights flashed across the mine compound. Operated by Robomen standing high in towers, the searchlights cast harsh glaring beams around the compound, moving constantly as they searched for anyone foolish enough to try to escape.\n

\nTom Campbell held the shed's door slightly ajar and looked out for a moment. He closed the door quickly as the light swept towards the shed.\n

\n'They'll never make it tonight,' he said, returning to Louise. 'The place is crawling with Daleks.'\n

\nLouise had just finished turning a pile of sacks into a sort of nest they could sleep on. 'We'll just have to wait then, that's all.'\n

\nTom took one final look through a grimy window before settling down on the sacks. 'Might manage it in the morning,' he said. Louise was looking concerned and he knew that she was worrying about her family. 'While the Daleks are having their breakfast,' he joked, trying to lift the mood.\n

\nIt didn't work. Louise's face remained a picture of worry.\n

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\nMorning brought dull clouds and a threat of rain, but David was glad the night was over. He and Dr Who had slept fitfully in the decaying shell of a cottage aware that their captor was close by. \n

\nThe man's name was Brockley. He had tried to start a conversation with them as they had settled to rest out the night but it was soon clear that he was only interested in getting information from them. He was looking for another angle to work.\n

\nDr Who had remained impassively tight lipped as he had drifted into sleep.\n

\nDavid kept a wary eye on Brockley until weariness from the journey and from constant battle finally overtook him and he dozed. When morning came, it felt as if he hadn't slept at all.\n

\nHe roused Dr Who and they found Brockley outside, boiling a small can over a fire. It smelled like...\n

\nCould that be coffee? David hadn't tasted real coffee in years. \n

\nBrockley moved swiftly to pick up David's rifle and swung it to cover his captives.\n

\nDr Who just looked at the profiteer with disgust. David made an effort to hide his disdain and looked at the coffee. 'That smells good.'\n

\n'Yes,' Dr Who agreed, 'it does.'\n

\n'Try some,' Brockley suggested. \n

\n‘Thank you.’ David reached eagerly for the can. He was only a few inches from the brew when Brockley’s foot tipped the can, sending its contents over the small fire. He controlled the urge to smash his fist into this worthless thief’s face.\n

\nBrockley turned away, sniggering at his trick. ‘Come on,’ he said, heading back towards the mine, ‘and bring that sack of food.’\n

\nPicking up the sack, David followed. He noticed that Dr Who’s physical manner had reverted to the bumbling old codger routine but his face was still showing that drive and intellect he had seen there earlier. Moving quickly and quietly, they followed Brockley towards the mine workings.\n

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\nLouise had heard the approaching footsteps before Tom. She grabbed his arm and pulled him down into hiding behind a stack of crates. The shed’s door opened and closed as someone hurried inside.\n

\n‘All right,’ a man’s hoarse voice said, ‘you can come out.’\n

\nIt didn’t sound like the man who had sent them to the shed but there was little point in pretending they weren’t there. Tom and Louise both stood slowly. \n

\nA balding man in tattered and filthy clothes stood just inside the door. He pulled a small tin from his pocket and put it on a crate. ‘He sent you some food. It’s not much but it’s something.’\n

\n‘Thanks very much,’ Tom said, fishing in his pocket for a pen-knife to open the tin.\n

\n‘What are you going to do?’ the man asked. ‘You can’t stay here forever.’\n

\nThe door opened again. Tom and Louise ducked into cover again but their new acquaintance stood firm. ‘Brockley?’\n

\nA surly, unpleasant-looking man hurried into the shed. ‘Who else?’ he demanded. Tom recognised the accent as Welsh. To Tom’s delight two more, more familiar and welcome figures followed this Brockley in and closed the door behind them.\n

\nLouise was already on her feet, hugging her uncle. ‘Doctor!’\n

\n‘Louise!’ Dr Who exclaimed in shock.\n

\nThe balding man shushed them instantly. ‘Keep your voices down!’\n

\nTom allowed his friends to have a quiet but excited family moment of reconciliation. He gave the curly haired young man with the Doctor a swift greeting. He recognised him as the one who had spirited the old boy away from the spaceship. He was pleased that the fellow had stuck with Dr Who. The young man was watching the third member of his party – this Brockley – with suspicious eyes as he spoke to the balding chap who had brought the food.\n

\n‘Who are those two?’ the bald man demanded nervously.\n

\n‘Two work lovers,’ Brockley oozed in reply. ‘They wanted to be in on the big deal. It’s quite a reunion, isn’t it?’\n

\nNow that he knew Dr Who and this... David, yes that was his name, weren’t a threat, the balding man lost interest in them. ‘Have you got the food?’ he asked Brockley.\n

\n'What about your end?' Brockley countered.\n

\n'I've got it.'\n

\nBrockley moved over to a barrel and cleared the top. 'Let's see it then.' \n

\nFrom inside his pocket, the mine worker pulled a little drawstring pouch and emptied it onto the barrel. A meagre collection of jewellery, mostly consisting of wedding rings and chains spilled onto the wooden surface.\n

\nBrockley looked unimpressed. 'There's not as much as before,' he complained. 'Still, you can have the food. I'm doing you a favour, though.'\n

\n'Is that what it is?' the worker said bitterly.\n

\nBrockley ignored the anger and slipped the jewellery into his pocket. Tom felt his stomach turn. He'd heard about this kind of thing in the war. Spivs, racketeers, profiteers... filth was a better word for them, profiting from everyone else's suffering. He could tell that David as disgusted as he was. He recognised the expression on the young man's face.\n

\nThe worker had picked up the sack of food and was making for the door when Dr Who caught his arm. 'Excuse me, my dear fellow,' he said politely. 'How much do you know about this mine?'\n

\nThe worker thought for a moment then seemed to decide that he had the time to answer. 'I know the work's nearly finished,' he said.\n

\n'Do you know what they're doing?' asked David.\n

\n'Yes,' the miner nodded, a haunted look ghosting across his exhausted face. 'The Daleks are going to extract the metallic core of the Earth. Some insane idea about piloting the planet through space and using it like a giant spaceship.'\n

\n'But that's impossible,' Louise exclaimed.\n

\n'Maybe.' The miner shrugged then leaned closer and continued his tale. 'The Daleks say they've found a fracture in the Earth's crust. They're going to use that fracture like a diamond cutter would. They're set up an explosive device to drop right through that fracture so that the core will burst out through the fracture and plunge into the sun.' Just telling the story seemed to have drained the last of his life from him. 'I haven't dared to tell the people here. For all I know this whole area could be blown to atoms.'\n

\nDr Who ignored the man's feelings. He was on the scent now and he wanted answers. 'And the Daleks are nearly ready?'\n

\n'They will be ready tonight,' the miner agreed.\n

\nThe Doctor hummed thoughtfully and pondered along moment. 'Could you obtain a plan of the mine workings?'\n

\nThe miner didn't have the chance to answer.\n

\n'I think I might arrange that,' Brockley said, surprising everyone else present. He smiled a joyless smile. 'I mean, if this goes up, I go up with it, right?'\n

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\nJust above the spaceship's landing position, and only clearly visibly from the ship, the Daleks had built a control complex for the mine. Its construction was fashioned after that of buildings on the Dalek home world of Skaro, with arched doorways and metal walls. Functional control panels packed the walls and at the centre of each level of the complex was a circular opening leading down into the mine shaft itself. The explosive device would be delivered from this control complex.\n

\nThe Gold Dalek, leader of all Dalek activity of Earth, treated this as its base on Earth, though it frequently travelled to other locations around the globe to observe the work being carried out.\n

\nAs soon as the Gold Dalek glided into the main control room, a black Dalek subordinate reported.\n

\n'The planet's outer core has been penetrated,' the Black Dalek said.\n

\nDaleks rarely feel satisfaction, but the Gold Dalek felt that unfamiliar sensation course through it. Soon their plan for conquest and extermination of all non-Daleks would move forward. 'The capsule containing the explosives will now be made ready,' it grated.\n

\nThe black Dalek moved to follow its orders, gliding to a lower level on the control room. 'Engage circuit four,' it ordered the red Dalek.\n

\n'Circuit four check commencing now,' the red Dalek confirmed. It moved to a panel and began operating controls.\n

\n'Final pre-release check continuing,' the Black Dalek stated. 'Blast-off will take place as scheduled.'\n

\nThe Gold Dalek looked past its underlings at the giant bomb which was slowly being manoeuvred along an overhead rail towards its release point over that enormous mine shaft. 'When the Earth's magnetic core is extracted we can pilot this planet to the vicinity of our own and occupy it.'\n

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\nFor what Tom assumed had to be the first time in his life, Brockley was as good as his word. He had disappeared out of the shed promising to get a plan of the mine workings. No-one expected to see him again but just over fifteen minutes later he had returned clutching a stolen set of plans. Nobody really wanted to know how he had obtained them.\n

\nDr Who had quickly set about studying the diagrams and maps with Louise, Tom and David at his side. Their mine-worker friend proved far more helpful than all of the others combined. \n

\nTo most of them the diagrams were a complex maze of conflicting information but Dr Who absorbed everything.\n

\n'This is obviously the main shaft bored by the Daleks,' he said, drawing a red pencil down a vertical line on the drawing, 'leading straight to the fracture.' He pointed to another line.

'Alongside it, indeed parallel to it here is the old shaft of the original mine, which leads to a position very near the meeting point of the magnetic influence of the North and South Poles.' He jabbed his finger at an area picked out in grey, wavy lines. 'The magnetic disturbance is why the

mine was initially closed.'

The miner pointed at one of two passages connecting the two vertical shafts. 'Those shafts are boarded up now.'

The Doctor was unconcerned. 'Yes, yes, yes,' he hurried on, 'but it is my belief that if we could somehow deflect their device...' The pencil followed the Dalek shaft to the second horizontal tunnel connecting it to the original shaft and the magnetic disturbance, '...down the old mine, the field of magnetism so released would be powerful enough to suck the Daleks into the very core of the Earth.'

The old fellow shook his fist and rapped it on the wooden bench. Tom had to admire the old lad's optimism and zeal. His brain told him the whole idea was impossible but the Doctor had such a fire in him that Tom could help believing the old boy... he couldn't help believing in him either.

'I think I know how we could do it,' the miner said thoughtfully. The first hint of real life had appeared in the man's eyes since Tom had met him. 'We could deflect it.'

Dr Who weighed the miner's words – and the miner himself – before agreeing. 'Good. Tom, you go with him.' Tom nodded his assent, though he was surprised the old boy hadn't asked for details. Dr Who continued, 'The rest of us must cause some sort of diversion.'

'I'm not in "the rest of us", understand?' Brockley said quickly. He was standing a little detached from the others, close to the door in case he needed to make a run for it.

The miner snorted derisively 'No, I didn't think you would be. No profit in it, is there?'

Brockley showed absolutely no shame in confessing both cynicism and cowardice. 'None,' he said with an oily grin, 'but far more danger than I like.' He opened the door. 'Good luck. See you,' he said in farewell and slipped away.

Dr Who turned back to Tom and his new miner comrade. 'Now then, you two. On your way.'

The miner nodded. 'What kind of diversion are you planning to make?'

Dr Who smiled tightly. 'You'll know when it happens,' he said confidently, 'and when it does, you get everybody away from this area as fast as you can.'

Louise caught Tom's hand. 'Good luck.'

Tom held onto that contact for as long as he could. 'You too,' he said, following the miner to the door.

He heard David ask Dr Who, 'What do you want us to do?'

The miner opened the door a fraction and closed it again silently. 'Not yet.'

Dr Who was answering the question he had been asked. 'David, I want you to take Louise and find a good hiding place for her.'

Louise snorted in indignation at her uncle's over-protective attempt to side-line her. Good luck with that, David thought to himself.

Dr Who continued, 'And then you help the people away from the mine.'

'What about you?' Louise asked her uncle.

\n\nThe old lad shook his head. 'I shall stay here.' He held up his hands to stop any further arguments. 'I have a reason.'\n\n

\n\nLouise obviously wasn't ready to give up just yet. 'Why can't we stay here with you?'\n\n

\n\nThe old scientist wouldn't hear of it. 'No, no, no,' he said briskly. 'It is time for you to go. Take care of her.'\n\n

\n\nThe miner opened the door. 'Clear.' Tom gave Louise what he hoped wasn't a final smile and followed the miner outside. The last thing he saw was Dr Who sitting himself down a small barrel and flipping open one of the notebooks he had brought.\n\n

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\n\nLouise watched Tom and the balding miner slip away through the maze of equipment and sheds. The policeman was brave and kind and funny. He hadn't blinked at the thought of putting himself in danger to do the right thing. She very much hoped he would come through the ordeal safely.\n\n

\n\nDavid was looking for a place to hide. Her first order of business was to tell him to forget about hiding her anywhere. Whatever needed done to help people get out of the mine she was going to be at the heart of it.\n\n

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\n\nOn the way to the mine, the balding miner had introduced himself as Conway.\n\n

\n\n'I'd forgotten about using my name,' the miner said. 'The Daleks do that. They stop you feeling. They take away your humanity. You stop remembering the things you love because it hurts too much.' He looked Tom in the eye. 'They make you forget who you are.'\n\n

\n\n'Not any more,' Tom said.\n\n

\n\nConway knew the mine workings inside and out. Tom was amazed that the miner managed to get them through the compound and into the mine itself without being halted even once. They were three levels down inside the mine before they had their first sight of a Roboman. He stood at the far end of a passageway, cracking his whip against the backs of a procession of slaves who wearily carried heavy baskets of rubble from the excavations.\n\n

\n\nThe miner put an arm across Tom's chest, holding him in hiding behind a stack of wooden crates until the Roboman and his prisoners had moved on. Cautiously, they eased their way along the passage, keeping their eyes alert for any movement. A ladder took them down another level and they continued on, with Conway quietly explaining his plan and the location of the equipment they would need to put it into operation. \n\n

\n\n'The wood's stacked on this level,' Conway said.\n\n

\n\nThey had made it halfway along the next passage when the sound of marching boots on wooden planking stopped them. It was impossible to tell which direction the footsteps were coming from.\n\n

\n\n'We'll have to pick a way and hope for the best,' Tom said.\n\n

\n\nConway shook his head. 'There's another way.' He pointed upwards. A dark gap ran along the

top of wall. The planking doesn't cover the whole wall. There's a space to hide up there.'

The climbed up the planked wall, pulling themselves onto a rough ledge. Moments later a pair of Robomen marched another column of exhausted workers along the passage. They gave the column time to be long gone before slowly dropping back to the floor of the passage. They hurried on, moving in the direction from which the column had come.

'That was a bit close, wasn't it?' Tom said quietly.

Conway agreed, looking around the next bend in the passage. 'Too close. It's not far now, though and it's deserted here. Come on.' Conway started along the passage again.

Convinced that Conway knew what he was doing, Tom followed.

The passage was at least a couple of hundred yards long and showed signs of not having been used for some time. Obviously the important work in this area had been done long before.

The passage ended at a gaping shaft which stretched up to a speck of light above them and to the inky depths below.

'The Dalek Control Room's directly above us now,' Conway said.

Tom peered into the shaft. A rather sickly light began to pulse in the darkness.

'The bomb's over our heads,' Conway continued. 'The lights is part of the release system.'

'Where's the passage to the old shaft?' Tom asked.

Conway nodded upwards. 'Straight up.'

That just about summed their luck up, Tom thought savagely. 'It would be, wouldn't it?' Tom's attention was focused on the shaft but Conway was looking along one of the other supply tunnels leading to the shaft where the figure of a man stood in semi-darkness, his dead eyes staring into the distance. Conway tried to pull Tom back but the dace in that corridor was familiar. 'It's all right, it's Craddock.' He called across at his former cellmate, 'Hey, Craddock, come and give us a hand. Come on.'

It was only as Craddock strode towards them that Tom saw the shiny black uniform and the helmet being pulled over his eyes. When he and Dr Who had escaped the Robotising process their cellmate hadn't been so fortunate. He was now a Dalek puppet.

Craddock's hands clamped on Tom's throat, squeezing hard. Tom struggled against the Roboman's grip but couldn't shake himself free. He couldn't breathe, couldn't get any air into his lungs. He clubbed at Craddock's arms but couldn't shift the hands at his throat. Lights flashed on the edge of his vision. Things were starting to go dull.

The hands were gone. Tom dropped to his knees, gasping for air. Every breath hurt but he sucked in each lungful gratefully. His eyesight cleared. Conway was struggling with Craddock. The miner had his arms clamped tightly around the Roboman. Craddock fought and struggled and Conway was only just managing to restrain him. Tom lurched to his feet, to join the fray.

He was too late.

The two men lost their balance and staggered towards the shaft, toppling over the edge and

plunging into the darkness below.\n

\nTom stared into the darkness, horrified. He hadn't liked Craddock much but he wouldn't have wished that fate on him. He had been reduced to a mindless puppet before plunging to his death. And Conway... he hadn't known Conway for even an hour but he liked the man. He had seen life and hope return to Conway's eyes with the prospect of disrupting the Daleks' plan. At least he had died fighting, Tom thought.\n

\nLooking around the passage Tom saw the planks of wood Conway had talked about. No matter what had happened to his comrade, Tom still had work to do. He needed reconnoitre the passage to the original shaft. \n

\nCarefully, but with all the haste he could muster, Tom began climbing the shaft.\n

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\nDr Who hadn't moved from the shed. He still sat on his barrel, reading through Dortmun's journals, making mental notes and cross-referencing them with his own thoughts. He looked up sharply as the door opened behind him and Brockley slipped in.\n

\n'Oh,' Dr Who said in surprise, 'so you've come back, have you?'\n

\n'Well, if you're right we're all in this together, aren't we?' Brockley answered. 'And I think I've had a very good idea to help you.'\n

\nDr Who stood. He appeared surprised but intrigued. 'Really?'\n

\nBrockley nodded thoughtfully. 'I want to show you something,' he said, reaching for the door.\n

\nDr Who caught his shoulder. 'Is it safe?'\n

\n'Oh, yes,' Brockley answered, 'of course.' He pulled the door open and Dr Who stepped outside.\n

\nA semi-circle of eight Daleks surrounded the shed's doorway, their weapons aimed at him. Dr Who sniffed in disdain.\n

\n'I'm so sorry,' Brockley said without any attempt at sincerity.\n

\nDr Who didn't bother looking at his betrayer. 'Oh, don't apologise,' he said dismissively, 'I expected it.'\n

\nThe lights on one of the Daleks flashed as it spoke. 'You will come with me.'\n

\nDr Who pulled on his gloves and allowed himself to be led away. Behind him he heard Brockley speaking to the Daleks.\n

\n'I told you he'd be here, didn't I?' the vile profiteer said.\n

\nThe Daleks didn't answer.\n

\n'About our deal,' Brockley continued...\n

\nGlancing back, Dr Who saw the remaining Daleks close slightly on the shed. That was the moment he saw Brockley realise that he had made a terrible miscalculation and that it was not possible to strike a deal with the Daleks. Brockley bolted into the shed, slamming the door behind him.\n

\n'Exterminate!' The Daleks screeched in unison, simultaneously blasting the shed with their

weapons. For an instant the wood charred and smoked and the air filled with steam from the heat of the weapons but then the shed erupted in an explosion as everything within it – Brockley included – was incinerated.\n

\nThe Daleks turned and followed behind Dr Who and his guard as they headed to the Control Complex.\n

\nDr Who gave one last look back to the burning remains of the shed. There had been nothing he could do to save Brockley. Now he himself was a prisoner of the Daleks.\n

\nCHAPTER TEN\n

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\nThe Final Battle\n

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\nThe climb up the shaft was slow and painful. Tom Campbell's hands were blistered and full of splinters but he kept climbing. \n

\nHe breathed a huge, relieved sigh when he saw black empty space through the planking on one side of the shaft. Looking through the wooden slats he saw a passage sloping down into darkness. This was the passage he had to deflect the bomb into. The first thing he had to do was remove the heavy planks covering the entrance to the passage. They were tall enough that if he loosened them at the top and pushed their tops across to the other side, they would rest at a diagonal across the shaft. He could reinforce that with other planks so that it would be strong enough to withstand the impact of the falling bomb. If he could use planks from further up the shaft for reinforcement that would be easier and quicker than trying to carry planks up from below by himself.\n

\nTom started climbing again.\n

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\nIn the Daleks' Control Complex, the red Dalek hurried to report to its gold leader. 'The rebel leader has been captured.'\n

\nThe Gold Dalek bubbled inside with hate and with satisfaction. This rebel leader was an enemy. It wasn't a Dalek and so it had to be hated. Its extermination would allow the Dalek plan to reach fruition, and that was as close to satisfaction as a Dalek could come.\n

\n'Excellent.' The Gold Dalek glided down a ramp to the lower level of the Control Room.

'Prepare to position capsule,' it ordered.\n

\nThe red Dalek acknowledged, spinning to relay the order to the blue and grey drone Dalek operating the mechanism. 'Capsule to forward position.'\n

\nThe drone operated the control. 'I obey.'\n

\nDaleks moved around the Control Room, checking and rechecking settings as the capsule containing the Dalek bomb was manoeuvred along an overhead belt until it hung over the shaft. Everything was prepared. Soon the Daleks' control over the Earth would be absolute.\n

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\nBill Wyler was lost. He didn't know what to do. Normally after rest he saw things at least slightly more clearly. Unfortunately the few hours he had dozed fitfully in the Dalek transport bringing himself and Susan to the mine along with a handful of other captives had only brought the certainty that he had finally lost completely.\n

\nHe hadn't been able to save Kirstie; now he wouldn't be able to save Susan.\n

\nAll he could do now was hold the girl's hand and offer platitudes that everything would be all right. \n

\nThey both knew that he was lying.\n

\nThey were being marched through the corridors of some Dalek complex overlooking the mine. He assumed they would be forced to work in the mine. If the Daleks planned to simply exterminate them they'd be dead already.\n

\nThe group of prisoners had turned into a corridor when a grey-haired old man shuffled around the far corner. \n

\nSusan recognised him immediately and ran towards him. 'Grandfather!'\n

\n'Susan!' The old man – Susan and Louise had both called him Dr Who – swept the girl up into a huge hug. \n

\nSusan returned the hug. 'I knew you'd find me!'\n

\nA Dalek pushed Wyler towards Susan and her grandfather. 'You two will wait with him.'\n

\nThe old man set his grand-daughter down. 'Yes,' he said conspiratorially, 'and I've found Louise, too.'\n

\nSusan looked relieved that her cousin was still alive. She looked at Wyler with affection. 'This is Mr Wyler,' she said, 'he looked after me.'\n

\nThe gratitude in Dr Who's face was thoroughly heartfelt. He gripped Wyler's hand and shook it vigorously. 'Thank you, Mr Wyler. Thank you.'\n

\nWyler struggled to explain the emotions he felt. He was relieved that Susan was reunited with her grandfather but it was a painful reminder that he would never be reunited with his own child. He shook himself. It was better to think of something less painful.\n

\n'This beats me,' Wyler said, looking around. 'Why do they bring all these people up here to dig a mine with their bare hands? Surely they could use a drill and do the job in half the time.' He had asked Dortmund the very same thing but had never been given a satisfactory answer... or an answer of any real kind at all.\n

\nUnfortunately, Dr Who didn't change that. 'I cannot explain that now,' he said, 'but Dortmund was right – at least in part: they have a bomb.'\n

\nFurther explanation was impossible. The Dalek pushed Dr Who forward. 'Move!' Metal shutters swung away from a doorway at the end of a corridor. 'Now!'\n

\nDr Who took Susan's hand and followed the instruction through the archway. Wyler followed through into what had to be the Daleks' main control chamber.\n

\n'It looks a lot like Skaro,' Susan said.\n

\nDr Who nodded and looked around the room but said nothing for the moment.\n

\nA black Dalek was speaking into some kind of microphone. 'Reserve Section Robomen Nine will come to Mine Centre.'\n

\nSusan had crossed to a rail around a wide hole in the floor. Wyler caught her shoulder to stop her falling over the edge. Dr Who concluded his brief look around and joined them as the black

Dalek continued speaking.\n

\n'Sections Eight and Ten, you will continue to patrol mine area,' it grated.\n

\nLooking down into the hole, Wyler was shock to see another familiar face looking up. Tom, the young man he had freed from the Robotising room along with Dr Who, was clinging to the inside of a shaft stretching down into the darkness. Tom waved shortly and nodded to Dr Who. The old man made a contented hmphing sound. Whatever was happening, a message passed wordlessly between the two men. They had both understood the message and were satisfied by it.\n

\n'This is the rebel leader,' the black Dalek said. \n

\nWyler looked around, wondering why the stupid dustbin was stating the obvious. A gold-coloured Dalek glided up the ramp onto the upper level of the Control Room.\n

\n'You will be exterminated,' the Gold Dalek said. It sounded eager to see the old man die.\n

\nDr Who didn't back down. He assessed the Gold Dalek for a moment before replying. 'You may be interested in something I have discovered,' the old fellow said casually. 'I know your weakness.'\n

\nThe Gold Dalek answered as Wyler expected it would. 'The Daleks have no weakness!' it rasped.\n

\nDr Who clasped his hands behind his back and strode purposefully around the rail protecting the shaft. 'Then why are you afraid to dig your own mine, hmm?' He waved a hand up at the capsule over the shaft. 'Your bomb is designed to slide down this shaft, strike a fracture in the Earth's inner surface and so release the magnetic core of our planet.' He leaned over and spoke so that the shaft echoed his voice. Wyler could see Dr Who was ensuring that Tom heard his words. 'But the fracture is near the meeting point of the magnetic influence of the North and South Poles.' The old man's eyes focused on the Gold Dalek. 'You are afraid of that magnetism, are you not?'\n

\nThe Dalek didn't answer.\n

\nDr Who continued, 'But you know that it cannot harm human beings. One mistake, one deviation in the aiming of your bomb and enough magnetic energy will be released to destroy you.'\n

\nWyler saw Tom begin to descend down into the shaft again. Soon he disappeared into the darkness.\n

\n'There will be no mistake,' the Gold Dalek said confidently. 'Nothing can stop us now.'\n

\nA familiar tramping of feet made Wyler turn. Half a dozen armed Robomen marched into the Control Room.\n

\n'These prisoners are to be exterminated,' the Gold Dalek announced.\n

\n'One moment,' Dr Who said urgently, 'you must listen to me. If you spare us, I can help you. I can show you how to neutralise this magnetism so that your plan can be carried out without danger to yourselves.'\n

\n'Reserve Section Robomen Nine, reporting as ordered,' one of the Robomen said lifelessly.\n

\nThe Gold Dalek spun its eye to Dr Who. 'Speak quickly,' it demanded, 'or die.'\n

\n'Better,' Dr Who said urgently, 'I'll show you.' \n

\nWyler wondered what the old man could show the Daleks to save their lives but then he saw a small black box in Dr Who's hand. The old man's thumb pressed a makeshift button.\n

\nA series of small explosions, not bigger than firecrackers detonated around the room... Wyler realised they were in the places Dr Who had been when he looked around.\n

\nThe Daleks spun to face this threat. \n

\nThat fraction of a moment was all that Dr Who had needed. With remarkable speed he had sprinted to the microphone the black Dalek had used. 'Attention all Robomen, attack the Daleks!' he yelled into the mic. 'Attack the Daleks. This order cannot be countermanded!'\n

\nEven as the Daleks turned their guns towards Dr Who, the Robomen who had just reported were on the move, blasting Daleks with the guns supplied by the Daleks themselves.\n

\n'Attack the Daleks!' Dr Who yelled again. He managed to throw himself aside just in time to avoid the blast of a Dalek. Instead, the weapons blew the communications equipment apart.\n

\nThe Robomen attacked their masters with a fury, blasting them, toppling them and ripping gun arms from the sockets. The Daleks fought back equally brutally, blasting their slaves with their guns or choking them with their pincer arms. \n

\nThe final, desperate battle for Earth was underway.\n

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\nLouise watched from a small rise as the battle swept through the entire mine complex. Every Roboman had turned against his Dalek master, attacking them savagely. Realising that everything had somehow changed, the mine workers threw themselves into the fight, battling alongside the overseers they hated so much. With nothing left to lose, the mine workers fought with years of pent-up rage.\n

\n'This way,' she called to the humans fleeing from the mine. 'This way.'\n

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\nWyler felt a hand pushing him towards the arched doorway. He had ducked his head to avoid a Dalek's blast. A moment later, Dr Who was urging him towards the door. The old man was pulling Susan with him. 'Hurry. I don't have any blasting caps left. Those were all I could find in the shed.'\n

\n'Stop him!' the Gold Dalek screeched. 'Stop him! Exterminate!'\n

\nIt was too late. They were already in the corridor beyond the archway and running, leaving the sound of the fight in the Control Room behind.\n

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\nThe Gold Dalek burned with the most primal rage and sated its instincts by blasting the Robomen in the room. It didn't matter that it blasted a Dalek as well. It was an acceptable loss to win the battle. It just needed to kill.\n

\n'Attention,' it grated. 'Roboman rebellion in the Control Complex has been defeated.' It turned to the red Dalek. 'Engage final release circuit immediately.'\n

\nThe red Dalek obeyed, instigating the counter monitoring the bomb's release. 'Rel counter is now set at zero.'\n

\n'Emergency!' a Dalek reported in. 'Slaves are escaping. Slaves escaping.'\n

\nCompleting the plan was what mattered now. 'Release the explosive device,' the Gold Dalek ordered. Once the plan was completed there would be no need for human slaves. They could be tracked down and exterminated. 'Order all Daleks to subdue the rebellion.'\n

\nThe red Dalek relayed the instruction. 'All Daleks proceed to control points. Destroy all resistance.'\n

\n'Explosive device is now set,' the black Dalek reported. 'Release will be at twenty Rels. Explosion will be at fifty Rels.'\n

\n'Order all Daleks to follow me to the spaceship at forty Rels,' the Gold Dalek ordered. Content that the final phase of their plan was under way, the Gold Dalek glided out of the control room, heading for the spaceship.\n

\nBehind it, the black Dalek swept its sucker arm across a sensor and the Rel counter began building towards its release point.\n

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\nTom Campbell had thought that the initial planks that he had moved from covering the entrance to the passage leading to the old shaft might have been enough to deflect the bombs. Having seen the giant capsule he had known that he had been wrong. They just wouldn't be strong enough. He had worked quickly, loosening half a dozen more planks and placing them at an angle across the shaft. He pulled another two free and man-handled them into place. \n

\nAnother two.\n

\nHe dropped those on top of others already in place, creating a barrier three planks deep in places.\n

\nThere was a noise from above. Looking up, Tom saw the bomb descending towards him. He threw himself at the side of the shaft and began clambering down. \n

\nThe bomb hit the barrier Tom had built. The vibration of the impact almost shook his grip loose. The wood creaked and threatened to crack but then the capsule was gone. The plan had worked. The bomb had been deflected into the passage leading down to the original shaft.\n

\nTom knew that he had done everything he could. The only thing he could do now was run and try to get out of the mine.\n

\nExhausted as he was, Tom found a burst of energy, fuelled by adrenalin and desperation. He knew he wouldn't have long before the bomb exploded and he had no idea what that would mean for the mine workings. He ignored the burning in his lungs and the pain that came from his aching body with every step. He just kept running.\n

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\n\nThe bomb's deflection had been observed in the Daleks control room.\n\n

\n\n'Explosive device is not on course,' the black Dalek reported. 'It will detonate in twenty three Rels.'\n\n

\n\nThe red Dalek had no answer but the deviation from their plan only filled it with even more hatred.\n\n

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\n\nTom had reached the mouth of the mine workings. The complex was a battlefield with Daleks and Robomen attacking each other violently. He ducked and weaved through the battle, avoiding blasts from Dalek weapons as he ran for a ramp leading to higher ground. \n\n

\n\nHe had barely started up the ramp when a Dalek appeared at the top, its eye and gun turning towards him. Had he done all of this, fought so hard, only to die so close to his escape?\n\n

\n\nA green tarpaulin was thrown over the Dalek. Tom didn't stop to see who threw it. He just kept running. He could hear the Dalek trying to blast its way free as he ran past it. He gave it a kick to send it hurtling down the ramp.\n\n

\n\nIt was only then that he saw the familiar tweed outfit ahead. It had been Louise and beside her, David, who had saved him with the tarpaulin. \n\n

\n\nShe was safe. That was something. He sprinted to catch up.\n\n

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\n\nThe black Dalek watched the Rel counter moving inexorably towards the bomb's detonation point. It tried to contact the spaceship and tried to contact the bomb but the communications panel had been destroyed in the battle. It didn't know what to do and that anger coursed through it.\n\n

\n\nThe complex vibrated as an explosion deep underground shook the entire mine workings. Sparks erupted across the surviving control panels and an alarm sounded.\n\n

\n\n'Danger! Danger!' the black Dalek screeched. 'The device has exploded off course. Abandon mine area. Abandon mine area.'\n\n

\n\nMore explosions began tearing through the complex and Daleks hurried to obey the order to abandon their posts.\n\n

\n\n'Magnetic force past danger point,' the black Dalek read from a panel. 'Abandon mine area.' It started to spin. It couldn't control itself. It couldn't stop. 'Abandon mine area!'\n\n

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\n\nWyler was amazed at how well Dr Who seemed to know his way through the Dalek complex.\n\n

\n\n'Almost there,' the old scientist said, leading them round a corner. He screeched to a halt.\n\n

\n\nJust a head, a Dalek was hurtling towards them, far faster than Wyler had ever seen any Dalek move. Its limbs flailed out of control. \n\n

\n\nThey flattened themselves against the walls and watched the Dalek careen past them. A moment later it smashed into the bulkhead behind and burst into flames.\n\n

\n\nDr Who punched the air with both fists. 'Oh good,' he exclaimed triumphantly. 'It's working!'\n\n

\nThey turned and fled the complex.\n

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\nAll around the area and all across the planet, the disturbance in the magnetic field had varying effects on Daleks. Those most distant from the mine lost orientation or shut down and were destroyed in Roboman attacks but those close to the mine suffered a more immediate and brutal fate. The magnetism crushed some where they stood. Others were caught by magnetic waves and dragged into the mine; dragged into the depths of the Earth. Some lost control and smashed into equipment causing the complex to be shaken by more explosions.\n

\nThe black Dalek had stopped spinning for a moment but it was still not under control. 'Am affected by magnetic force. Cannot control. Cannot control. Cannot control.' It couldn't stop saying the same thing over and over. It was being pulled backwards. It was spinning again. 'Cannot control. Cannot control. Cannot control.' This couldn't happen. It was a Dalek. \n

\nThe black Dalek smashed through the restraining barrier and was dragged into the shaft, hauled down by the magnetic force. Its last conscious thought before oblivion was that this could not happen to a Dalek. Daleks were the superior beings.\n

\nAn instant after the black Dalek plunged into the shaft, its red superior followed, also screaming in impotent rage that it was out of control. It twisted and spun as it fell, impacts against the side of the shaft shearing its gun and eye stalk off.\n

\nAs it fell, explosion after explosion tore through the Dalek complex.\n

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\nThe explosions were also felt above ground but only served to make the former slaves run faster, to put more distance between themselves and the collapsing mine.\n

\nLouise, Tom and David were encouraging the workers to run hard and fast and to get into whatever cover they could find. Even here, half a mile from the mine opening it still felt too close.\n

\nLouise caught Tom's sleeve and pointed. The Dalek saucer was powering its engines, preparing for take-off.\n

\nThey redoubled their efforts to get everyone moving.\n

\nLouise was waving. Tom followed her gaze. Dr Who, Susan and the man Louise had said was called Wyler were hurrying towards them. He waved them forward urgently.\n

\nThey were short on time. The Dalek ship was in trouble. It wasn't rising smoothly as it should. The engines fought against the gravity waves from beneath the ground but they were losing.\n

\nDr Who and his party arrived with Tom and Louise just as the ship began its uncontrolled descent. 'Get down!' Dr Who yelled.\n

\nThey all threw themselves flat on the ground grateful for a rise of earth in front of them. They heard the engines whine, felt the air vibrate and then felt the impact of the ship and the

explosion as it exploded, its engines torn apart by the strains of gravity and the impact on the ground. \n

\nLooking up they saw only fire and debris. A moment later there was another explosion at the Daleks' mine complex was finally destroyed.\n

\nSlowly, everyone risked looking up. The mine was destroyed, so was the Dalek spaceship. In their place was a burning crater.\n

\n'That's the finish of that lot anyway,' Wyler's gruff voice said. He was looking at the carnage with a mixture of so many emotions Tom couldn't begin to count them all.\n

\n'The end of all the Daleks who invaded Earth, Mr Wyler,' Dr Who corrected. The old man had been helped to his feet by Louise and Susan. 'Let us hope they never dare to land here again. They know that the power to defeat them is at our feet.' He nodded to himself. 'Strong irresistible magnetic power from Mother Earth herself.' The old fellow turned and began walking away slowly. 'It's the same as everything else, Susie. There's always an answer to be found if you dig deep enough.'\n

\nAs they moved away Louise slipped her hand into Tom's and he just smiled. Susan took Wyler's hand in one of hers and took her grandfather's in the other. David dropped into step beside Bill Wyler. Along with the mineworkers they began the long trek that lay ahead.\n

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Farewells

The question that was asked most often in the days following the defeat of the Daleks was 'What now?' For longer than anyone could remember, all they had done was fight Daleks. Now they had a much bigger challenge. They had a world to rebuild.

Destroying was always easy. Creating was a far harder challenge.

Once, in a different lifetime, Bill Wyler had run a building company. David was persuading him to put those skills to use again, rebuilding homes, cities and a world.

As word spread of the Daleks' defeat, more survivors came out of hiding and numbers swelled. By the time they reached London they were like a small army and they were beginning to make plans.

Though they were all intrigued to see how their friends would rebuild Earth, Dr Who's party also knew that this was not their time and that they had to return to their own era.

There had been no shortage of volunteers to clear the debris covering Tardis. As they did so, Dr Who and his companions said their goodbyes.

Dr Who thanked Wyler again for looking after Susan so well. Susan, in turn, pointed out that there were a lot of orphans in need of someone to look after them. Wyler shook his head but Susan was insistent. She had introduced Wyler to a family of two sisters and their little brother. For all of his protests, Wyler had a new family, and had returned Susan's hug as she said goodbye.

Louise had tended to Tom's various injuries on the way back. His hands were a bloodied mass of blisters, splinters and cuts after his work in the mine shaft. She had cleaned and bound them and in their innocence they had assumed nobody noticed how much time they were spending together. David and Tom commented on the coincidence of them having the same surname... though David had the oddest feeling he had seen photographs of Tom before... Tom and Louise. Saying goodbye to David had been like saying goodbye to family.

Finally, however, Dr Who had operated the controls and Tardis had begun its voyage through time and space, leaving David and Wyler slack-jawed with disbelief as the Police Box had simply disappeared in front of their eyes.

Special Constable Tom Campbell was back in his uniform. Tardis had cleaned and pressed his uniform. He had even been able to shower inside one of the smaller rooms on board the ship. Unbelievably, it was even bigger than he had thought.

'I'm all ready, Doctor,' he announced to Dr Who, who was engrossed in an experiment on one

of his work benches.\n

\nLouise straightened his tie. 'Very handsome,' she said approvingly. Tom winked in return.\n

\nDr Who looked up from his experiment. 'Oh, yes, yes. Splendid, my boy. A credit to the force.'

He pottered off to make an adjustment to a computer.\n

\nTom followed the old fellow. 'Doctor? Now, Doctor, you will put me back where we talked about? You know... with the villains robbing the jewellery store?'\n

\n'Oh, yes, yes,' Dr Who agreed. 'Of course. And so I shall.'\n

\nThe ship shook slightly as it landed. Tom stopped at the door. His mouth felt slightly dry. Even after everything he had been through, he was nervous. \n

\n'Don't worry, Tom,' Louise reassured him.\n

\nThat made him feel better.\n

\n'Your destiny awaits you,' Dr Who said encouragingly.\n

\n'Shall I release the doors, Grandfather?' Susan asked.\n

\n'Yes, please, Susie.' Dr Who patted Tom on the shoulder. 'Good luck.'\n

\n'Ta, very much.'\n

\nOpening the door, Tom Campbell went back to police work.\n

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\nSid Jones and his friends had just had a very good night's work. \n

\nThey had nicked a Jag, knocked off a jewellery store, had the fun of beating up a hobby bobby and were about to turn a corner and make a clean getaway.\n

\nSid dropped the Jag into second and turned the corner. \n

\nHis foot stamped on the brake. A bright light was in front of them. A bright light from a Police Box? In the middle of the road?\n

\nThe car slewed as Sid braked and it skidded to a halt. Sid's door was pulled open before he knew what was happening. A truncheon came down hard, knocking Sid out cold. Two more blows knocked out the already shaken men in the back.\n

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\nTom Campbell pushed the Jag's driver across to the passenger seat and got behind the wheel. 'They'll make me Detective Inspector Tom Campbell for this,' he chuckled. 'Detective Inspector Tom Campbell, OBE.' He waggled his eyebrows at the unconscious thieves. 'Thank you, lads.'\n

\nHe put the car in first and started to pull away. As he did so, he saw Dr Who, Susan and Louise waving from Tardis' door. He waved back and grinned.\n

\nHe hoped Dr Who would move Tardis back to its place in his garden. It wouldn't do for the Police Box to be there when traffic picked up in the morning. Besides, it needed to be home by tomorrow night. He was dropping round to see Louise.\n

\nThe three robbers in the car had just had a very bad night but Tom Campbell had just had the longest and most amazing night of his life... and his life was never going to be the same again.\n

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\nDR WHO WILL RETURN IN\n

\nDR WHO AND THE ICE MEN FROM MARS\n

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\nDr Who arrives in the future to find that the Earth is now gripped by a new ice age.\n\n

\nAs the ice spreads south, it brings with it a threat from the distant past...\n\n

\n...and from a distant world...\n\nThe Ice Warriors have laid claim to the Earth.\n

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